Saint Mary’s College
New Core Curriculum

The heart of the new Core Curriculum - and the thing that makes it most exciting - is the principle that students’ common education will no longer be defined principally by area (that is, by distribution requirements), but by substantial learning goals expressed in assessable outcomes. The Academic Senate’s adoption of the Core Curriculum Task Force’s “Model 1” proposal (23 April, 2009) established twelve of these learning goals, grouped in three categories: Habits of Mind, Pathways to Knowledge, and Engaging the World. Through the summer and fall of 2010, the Core Curriculum Implementation Committee has coordinated the formulation of assessable Learning Outcomes and guiding Rationales for each of the Learning Goals, and has drafted descriptions of the membership and charge of a permanent Core Curriculum Committee (CCC) and Director, for review by the Undergraduate Educational Policies Committee and (ultimate) adoption by the Academic Senate. (The Senate has so far adopted a plan for the membership and charge of the CCC, and will, at its January 12 General Meeting, consider Handbook language establishing the CCC and the position of Director of the Core Curriculum.)

The goals and draft outcomes highlight and make more intentional – for faculty, students, and observers - enduring aims, well-established in our current core curricula (e.g., critical thinking, shared inquiry, and serve, further, to universalize undergraduate inquiry in areas of moment to Saint Mary’s Catholic, Lasallian or liberal arts character (e.g., the common good, American diversity).

This document attempts to compile all current information regarding the new core curriculum. It is adapted from various Core Curriculum Task Force (CCTF), Core Curriculum Implementation Committee (CCIC), Undergraduate Educational Policies Committee (UEPC) and Academic Senate (AS) documents. Paragraphs are labeled to indicate the ‘highest’ group that has adopted or endorsed their content: the “Senate”, the “UEPC” or “CCIC”. Language that has already received Academic Senate approval should be considered definite (for the time-being); paragraphs designated as “UEPC” and “CCIC” are the ones we are most interested in receiving feedback on. These remain subject to amendment by the CCIC or UEPC on their way to final consideration by the Senate.

The current SMC “General Education” requirements occupy nearly half of a four-year undergraduate student’s coursework. So it is not surprising that the new core curriculum will involve substantial overhead and structure. Below you will find the documents that have been adopted by the various responsible parties in their work to establish the new core; in particular,

- The twelve Learning Goals (what the purpose of this area of study is), each with associated
  - Learning Outcomes (what specifically students are to learn),
  - Rationale (describing the intent of the learning outcomes, as a guide to the CCC, and
  - Implementation (explaining what course(s) or experience will ‘house’ this goal).
- A comparison of the new and existing general education requirements
- The duties and structure of the forthcoming Core Curriculum Committee adopted by the Senate
- The position description for the Director of the Core Curriculum, to be considered by the Senate on January 12th
- A explanation of the Disciplinary Expertise requirement for Core Curriculum courses
- List of possibly implicit assumptions underlying earlier documents.
HABITS OF MIND

A primary goal of the core curriculum is that students think deliberately and express themselves in a coherent and persuasive manner. In developing these habits, students gain proficiency in explaining, justifying and modifying their ideas, and they gain the ability to reflect critically on their assumptions. The habits are ways in which students approach areas of knowledge and methods of inquiry. Considered fundamental to a liberal education, habits of mind foster each student’s development as one who seeks to know the truth and is preparing for a lifelong pursuit of knowledge. [AS]

Students will receive regular exposure to these goals/outcomes throughout much of their academic coursework, in the core, in the major, and in electives. In addition, there will be a developmental program for students in these goals in the four-course sequence in Collegiate Seminar and three-course sequence in writing (English 4, English 5, and Upper-Division Writing). [CCIC]
Critical Thinking (a Habit of Mind)

Learning Goal: Critical thinking includes the processes of analysis, synthesis and evaluation necessary to understand and acquire knowledge. In addition to the application of formal logic, critical thinking also incorporates careful observation, reflection and experience. Critical thinking is not only applied in investigations intended to result in a single, unambiguous conclusion, but also includes skills that allow for sound judgments to be made when multiple, competing viewpoints are possible. Throughout the core curriculum, students will practice the habits of critical thinking and move forward in their ability (and perhaps willingness) to question their assumptions. In short, students will be able to recognize, formulate and pursue meaningful questions about their own and others’ ideas. [AS]

Learning Outcomes: Students will
1. Identify and understand assumptions and theses that exist in the work of others; and
2. Ask meaningful questions, originate plausible theses, and identify underlying assumptions; and
3. Seek and identify confirming and opposing evidence relevant to original and existing theses; and
4. Evaluate and synthesize evidence for the purpose of drawing valid conclusions. [UEPC adpted]

Rationale (i.e., the intention of the proposed outcomes): The essence of critical thinking is the ability to engage in well-reasoned “criticism.” Criticism as used here means development of skills necessary for doing credible analysis of the ideas of others, and developing credible and original ideas of one’s own. The term “theses” is intended to include a broad spectrum of assertions, hypotheses, and premises relative to a variety of academic disciplines. The term “assumptions” is included because sophisticated analysis requires recognition, articulation, and understanding of theses, as well as recognition, articulation and understanding of assumptions that explicitly or implicitly underlie theses. Outcome #3 requires both “confirming and opposing” evidence to be gathered and considered in order to help students engage first in effective “objective” analysis rather than supporting an argument solely with data that favors their position. [UEPC considered]

The skills necessary to arrive at credible conclusions concerning one’s own and others’ ideas include careful observation, collection, analysis, and use of appropriate data, as well as perception of relevant ambiguities. The outcomes aim to structure the process of developing these skills. Outcome #1, therefore, requires that the student engage with, and understand, ideas in the work of others. Outcome #2 requires the student to explore by formulating questions and answers to develop ideas of their own. Outcome #3 is directed specifically toward teaching the student to recognize and collect evidence that both supports and opposes their ideas and those of others in order to arrive at conclusions characterized, in so far as possible, by objective realities. Outcome #4 asks the student to go further in the process of arriving at conclusions characterized by objective realities by learning to evaluate and weigh the evidence or data collected. [UEPC considered]

Implementation: We expect all students to engage in critical thinking throughout the curriculum. Students who spend four years at the college will be required to take four Collegiate Seminar courses, and it is expected that those courses in particular fulfill this learning goal in a developmental way. It is the responsibility of the Collegiate Seminar Board, working with the Core Curriculum Committee, to ensure this. [CCTF, CCIC]
**Shared Inquiry** (a Habit of Mind)

**Learning Goal**: Shared inquiry is the act of reasoning together about common texts, questions, and problems. It is a goal of the core curriculum to advance students' abilities to develop and pursue meaningful questions in collaboration with others. Through the habits of shared inquiry students will be able to carefully consider and understand the perspectives and reasoned opinions of others, reconsider their own personal opinion, and develop rhetorical skills. [AS]

**Learning Outcomes**: Students will
1. Advance probing questions about a common text or other object of study; and
2. Collaborate in sustained lines of inquiry; and
3. Reexamine judgments in light of evidence and collaborative discussion; and
4. Engage in inclusive, respectful conversation with others. [UEPC adopted]

**Rationale** (i.e., the intention of the proposed outcomes): The goal of Shared Inquiry is about skills and attitudes, rather than particular knowledge. The first three outcomes are the major skills that we aim for students to learn:

1. Starting with a common text (as in Seminar) or other object of study (as in a science lab), we want students to be able to ask the sorts of deeper and more challenging questions that drive forward discussion and the search for knowledge.
2. Based on those initial questions, we want students to be able to work together in the sustained pursuit of an answer, rather than each student pursuing his/her answer individually.
3. Based on that sustained pursuit of an answer, which will bring to light new evidence and a variety of differing opinions, we want students to learn to reevaluate initial hypotheses, both their own and those of others, with the goal of making more informed judgments at the end of the shared inquiry.

The final outcome is both a skill and an attitude. It is intended to highlight the character of the shared inquiry, one of openness and civility in the critical examination of ideas. [UEPC considered]

**Implementation**: The method of shared inquiry is common in many disciplines. Students who spend four years at the college will be taking four Collegiate Seminar courses, and it is expected that those courses fulfill this learning goal in a developmental way. It is the responsibility of the Collegiate Seminar Board, working with the Core Curriculum Committee, to ensure this. [CCIC]
**Written and Oral Communication** (a Habit of Mind)

**Learning Goal:** A goal of the core curriculum is the development of strong written and oral communication skills. A mind is not truly liberated until it can effectively communicate what it knows. Students will develop communication skills that reflect an understanding of the power of language to shape thought and experience. They will learn to write and speak logically, with clarity, and with originality. [AS]

**Learning Outcomes:** Students will

1. Recognize and compose readable prose, as characterized by clear and careful organization, coherent paragraphs and well-constructed sentences that employ the conventions of Standard Written English and appropriate diction; and
2. Recognize and formulate effective written and oral communication, giving appropriate consideration to audience, context and format; and
3. Analyze arguments so as to construct ones that are well supported, are well reasoned, and are controlled by a thesis or exploratory question; and
4. Use the process of writing to enhance intellectual discovery and unravel complexities of thought. [UEPC considered]

**Rationale** (i.e., the intention of the proposed outcomes): In their emphasis on both analysis and formulation, outcomes #1-3 reflect the need for students to analyze and assess how others communicate in order to successfully communicate themselves. Outcome #1 (grammar) addresses the need for students to use appropriate grammar in writing and speaking. Outcome #2 (rhetoric) recognizes that students are part of a complex world and stipulates that students must be able to tailor their communication for different audiences and different situations. Outcome #3 (logic) concerns the need for students to communicate ideas in a precise and organized fashion. Outcome #4 reflects a much deeper objective, i.e., that students are able to use the writing process as an occasion for creativity and discovery and to acquire and develop the liberal art of clear, coherent thinking. (Satisfying this learning outcome would likely require students to participate in a multi-stage process of developing ideas that included substantive writing, though not exclusively writing.) Finally, it must be noted that the outcomes treat communication as the controlling idea and envision written and oral communication as necessary species within the genus. Therefore, outcomes #2-3 are about communication skills, broadly speaking, and do not separate expectations for writing and speaking. [UEPC considered]

**Implementation:** While we expect that many courses will teach these skills, the area of the core curriculum in which the developmental scaffolding can be ensured is in the Composition sequence and the upper-division (major) writing requirement. As all of these Written and Oral Communication outcomes are part of the same process of learning, any course seeking to qualify as a Written and Oral Communication course would need to teach all four outcomes. [CCIC]

The Director of Composition is tasked, together with the Core Curriculum Committee, with ensuring that English 4 and 5 fulfill the Writing and Oral Communication outcomes, at a lower division level. Students are also required to take an upper division course within their major that has a significant writing component. This course must be approved as meeting the Writing and Oral Communication outcomes at an upper division level and in a manner appropriate for the major. [CCIC]
Information Evaluation and Research Practices (Habits of Mind)

**Learning Goal:** Through the core curriculum, students will gain an understanding of the standards by which information is evaluated in society. Students will learn to judge the authenticity, validity, reliability, and originality of the sources of information they use. They will be able to do the research necessary to weigh evidence objectively in traditional and electronic formats. [AS]

**Learning Outcomes:** Students will
1. Develop search strategies and use library catalogs and databases to find relevant material; and
2. Evaluate the reliability of sources; and
3. Integrate evidence and employ appropriate citation; and
4. Understand the concept of intellectual property and practice academic honesty. [UEPC considered]

**Rationale** (i.e., the intention of the proposed outcomes): The first outcome concerns the search for information, which must require both reflective intentionality and facility with the actual resources. The second outcome concerns the students’ ability to judge the quality of the information that is discovered in the search, identifying its biases and possible alternatives. The third outcome concerns the writing process itself, focusing especially on an argument that grows out of the integration of the evidence (discovered and evaluated) and that is supported by that evidence, properly cited. The fourth outcome concerns knowledge and practice of ethical standards in the use of information, an expectation that would presumably be integrated with the Honor Code. [UEPC considered]

**Implementation:** The Director of Composition, together with the Core Curriculum Committee, is tasked with insuring that English 4 and 5 fulfill the Information Evaluation and Research Practices outcomes, at a lower division level. Students are also required to take an upper division course within their major with a writing component. This course must be approved as meeting the Information Evaluation and Research Practices outcomes at an upper division level and in a manner appropriate for the major. [CCIC]
PATHWAYS TO KNOWLEDGE

The Pathways to Knowledge are understood as disciplinary ways of knowing, rather than simply objects of study. That is, there are different ways of attempting to make sense of the world – mathematical, theological, scientific, etc. – that have differing (though not necessarily contradictory) standards of evidence and argumentation. Each contributes to human knowing in fundamental ways, and students are expected to have substantive exposure to them in their coursework. [CCIC]

Courses that fulfill the Learning Goals in this category will come from a variety of departments and disciplines. The primary requirement is that the course satisfy the learning outcomes under that goal. This means that some non-disciplinary, inter-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary courses will satisfy requirements whose name might suggest a single discipline. [cf. Senate Action S-10/11-8 (11 November, 2010), amending Senate Action S-08/09-17 (adoption of CCTF “Model 1”) [CCIC, AS]
**Mathematical and Scientific Understanding** *(Pathways to Knowledge)*

**Learning Goal:** Mathematics and science courses that are part of the core curriculum will develop quantitative, observational, and problem solving abilities of students. In addition to gaining an understanding of content and methodologies, students will examine mathematics and science as a creative endeavor. They will also consider the social and ethical issues of scientific inquiry and application. [AS]

**Mathematics Learning Outcomes:** Students will
1. Apply abstract and logical reasoning to identify patterns and solve mathematical problems; and
2. Communicate mathematical ideas and concepts accurately and clearly using mathematical symbols, language, and formulas.

**Scientific Learning Outcomes:** Students will
1. Demonstrate an understanding of scientific concepts, principles, and theories that explain the natural and physical world; and
2. Collect, analyze, and interpret empirical data gathered in a laboratory or field setting; and
3. Examine social or ethical issues that arise in the process of scientific inquiry or out of scientific or technological developments. [UEPC considered]

**Rationale** *(i.e., the intention of the proposed outcomes):* While Mathematical and Scientific Understanding are included in the same learning goal, they constitute two distinct ways of knowing. Thus, we have divided the outcomes. “Science” is the practice of gathering data about the natural/physical world, formulating hypotheses about how the world works based on that data, testing and revising and inductively arguing one’s way forward. “Mathematics”, on the other hand, assumes the validity of certain premises and argues deductively from them.

Mathematics Outcomes: Outcome #1 is written to be intentionally broad, to include both pure and applied mathematics. Outcome #2 is about students’ ability to communicate their knowledge in this area.

Science Outcomes: Outcome #1 makes clear that by “science” we intend students to be able to understand the way of knowing constitutive of the natural and physical sciences, rather than one of the many other disciplines that uses the term “science” (e.g., the social sciences). The areas of the “natural and physical world” that it may address should be understood broadly (e.g., physics, chemistry, biology, neuroscience, anatomy). Outcome #2 uses the phrase “laboratory or field setting” in order to make it clear that “lab” should be understood in the broadest possible way. Outcome #3 intends that students have demonstrated some understanding of one or more of the social and/or ethical issues that occur within or result from developments in modern science. [UEPC considered]

**Implementation:** All students are required to take one course satisfying the Mathematics Learning Outcomes, and one course satisfying the Scientific Learning Outcomes. Such courses may be offered from a number of different disciplines (including Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics, and Physics). Mathematical Understanding courses must meet both of the proposed learning outcomes. Scientific Understanding courses must meet all three of the proposed learning outcomes, with the exception that introduction-to-the-major science courses (specifically, Chemistry 8/9, Physics 1/2 and Physics 10/11) need to meet only outcomes #1 and #2. [CCIC]
Artistic Understanding (a Pathway to Knowledge)

Learning Goal: In the core curriculum, students will analyze, interpret and critique works of art, considering the role of formal methods and techniques, and historical contexts. In addition to intellectual engagement with the arts, students will also creatively engage with the arts through practice. [AS]

Learning Outcomes: Students will

1. Analyze and interpret the form and meaning of works of art by applying discipline-based critical vocabulary and theory to explore the work's significance within appropriate contexts (e.g., historical, cultural, aesthetic);
In addition, students will
2. Participate actively in a creative process using practices and materials specific to an artistic medium in order to produce an object or event appropriate to the discipline. [UEPC adopted]

Rationale (i.e., the intention of the proposed outcomes): A “Work of Art” is the result of a creative or expressive production or event (e.g., painting, film, video, play, fiction, poem, concert). Producing and analyzing art are ways of knowing, ways of encountering and understanding the world. This way of knowing includes intellectual/cognitive/theoretical engagement with works of art (as in outcome #1), and an embodiment/creative practice component (seen in outcome #2). These outcomes are roughly distinguished as knowledge (epistêmê) and craft or skill (technê).

Courses that meet the first learning outcome will include many of the traditional “humanities” courses (such as art and music history and literature). Courses that meet both learning outcomes will also have a substantial creative component, and could, for example, be certain studio and creative writing classes. Because we are interested first in knowledge, and secondarily in craft, the focus must be on analysis and criticism. Thus, all Artistic Understanding courses must satisfy learning outcome #1. [UEPC considered]

Implementation: Students are expected to take two courses that meet the Artistic Understanding goal. [AS] They must have at least .25 credits of course-work (or equivalent) that meets learning outcome #2, either within the two courses or in a separate course. [UEPC considered]
Theological Understanding (a Pathway to Knowledge)

Learning Goal: Through the study of religious texts, traditions, rituals, history, and human experience, students will engage in an academic exploration of religion and theology. They will join in an exploration of God, humankind, and the world as expressed in the Catholic and other religious traditions. Students will appreciate the social, cultural, ethical, and theological implications that such questions have for how we should live both individually and as a community. [AS]

Christian Foundations Learning Outcomes: Students will
1. Demonstrate knowledge of major texts and themes of the Bible, including major theological and interpretive principles central to the Catholic tradition; and
2. Demonstrate an understanding of basic methods and tools used in scholarly interpretation of biblical texts; and
3. Demonstrate an ability to read biblical texts in light of relevant contextual factors (e.g., historical, cultural, literary, theological). [UEPC considered]

Theological Explorations: Students will
1. Demonstrate an understanding of one or more aspects of Christian tradition and/or another religious tradition or traditions, acquired through focused study in a sub-field of theology or religious studies; and
2. Demonstrate an ability to explore religious questions from a believer’s point of reference and from the critical perspective of the academy. [UEPC considered]

Rationale (i.e., the intention of the proposed outcomes): Students will take two courses devoted to theological understanding. Foundational study in Christian theological understanding will expose students to major texts and themes of the Bible, as well as to issues pertaining to its contextual and scholarly interpretation. Moreover, in conversation with biblical texts and themes, students will become familiar with biblical principles central to the Catholic Christian tradition. In addition to being one of the “great books” of Western civilization and culture, the Bible represents within the Catholic and other Christian traditions the fundamental gospel revelation of God in Jesus Christ. Therefore, and in light of Divino Afflante Spiritu and other Catholic teaching regarding the interpretation of the Christian Scriptures, it is fitting that students demonstrate knowledge of major texts and themes of the Bible, including theological and interpretive principles central to the Catholic tradition; an understanding of basic methods (e.g., source-, redaction-, narrative-criticism) and tools (e.g., biblical commentaries) for scholarly interpretation of religious texts; and an ability to engage biblical texts in light of contextual factors (e.g., historical, cultural, literary, theological). [UEPC considered]

Building upon this foundational work, students will develop further the skills of theological understanding, either through continued exploration of the Christian tradition or through exploration of another religious tradition or traditions. This exploration can focus on one tradition as a whole, a part of one tradition, or several traditions. By “focused study in a sub-field of theology or religious studies,” we intend that students must continue to engage with the disciplinary methods and skills of theological understanding, understood broadly to include all of the subfields of theology and religious studies (e.g., from classical Thomism to Jungian psychology). A crucial aspect of this theological understanding is the ability to explore religious and faith questions from the
inside (i.e., within a believer’s frame of reference) and from the outside (i.e., from the critical perspective of the academy), as such a balance / tension is crucial for responsible theological work. [UEPC considered]

Implementation: Two courses satisfying these learning outcomes are required of each four-year student. (Students who enter at the junior or senior level are required to take only one.) As a pair they must satisfy the Theology Understanding outcomes. The faculty of the department of Theology and Religious Studies is tasked with working with the Core Curriculum Committee to ensure that a sufficient number of their courses satisfy these learning outcomes. [CCIC]
Social, Historical, and Cultural Understanding (Pathways to Knowledge)

**Learning Goal:** By studying the world from the perspectives and frameworks of history and the social sciences, students will understand how to place today’s world in a meaningful context and to arrive at sufficiently complex explanations for current social arrangements. These perspectives and their methodologies allow students to probe deeply into the richness and diversity of what it has meant and means to be a human in relationship with others, in different places and times. [AS]

**Learning Outcomes:** Students will

1. Examine human activity in particular periods or places from a social, cultural or historical perspective; and
2. Demonstrate an understanding of theories of human behavior, relations, culture, or institutions; or interpretations of historical causation and change; and
3. Employ social science or historical methodology to collect and interpret evidence about the social world. [UEPC adopted]

**Rationale** (i.e., the intention of the proposed outcomes): The outcomes for Social, Historical, and Cultural Understanding are intended to reflect the methodology of the disciplines of social science and history. Outcome #1 is about content, noting that students are expected to learn and apply their skills in the context of the study of human activities. Outcome #2 expects students to articulate one or more theoretical/explanatory frameworks that are operative in these disciplines. This will likely take on different forms, depending on the criteria of the specific discipline in question. Outcome #3 expects students to employ the methodology used by these disciplines – i.e., their standards of evidence and argumentation. [UEPC adopted]

**Implementation:** Students are required to take two courses that meet these learning goals. [AS]
ENGAGING THE WORLD

In addition to developing habits of mind and pursuing pathways to knowledge, the core curriculum requires students to examine and reflect on what it means to be a citizen in a local community and as part of the global community. To achieve these goals, students will use the habits of critical thought and shared inquiry to explore justice, civic responsibility, and social, economic, and cultural differences. Students will also move out of the traditional classroom to learn from experience and to apply the knowledge they have acquired in the classroom.

There are a variety of ways in which students may demonstrate they have met the outcomes of the goals in this category. Approved coursework, taken as an elective or as part of student’s major or minor or during January Term, is one way. (In fact, some classes may count for more than one learning goal, as double and even triple dipping is allowed.) It will be up to the department (in the case of semester-based courses) or the individual faculty member (for January Term classes) to suggest whether and how their courses meet these criteria. Students may petition for credit based on experiences they have had outside the classroom (such as study abroad, volunteer service, internships, etc.). They must then demonstrate in writing how their experiences advanced their academic understanding in these areas. Finally, students may have the option to enroll in a .25 credit class with faculty supervision (similar to an independent study) in which they do the work of demonstrating how their experience has advanced their learning.
The Common Good (Engaging the World)

**Learning Goal:** The core curriculum is one of the key vehicles for living out the College’s Catholic and Lasallian traditions, which asks student to explore the meaning of the common good. This goal encourages vigorous academic debate about different ideas of what the common good is and how it might be pursued. [AS]

**Learning Outcomes:** Students will complete two of the following outcomes:

1. Reflect and write substantively on ways in which human beings find fulfillment in community; or
2. Articulate, in prose or through another communicative medium, a critical account of just social order; or
3. Demonstrate a capacity for coherent, principled analysis of concrete social problems. [UEPC adopted]

**Rationale** (i.e., the intention of the proposed outcomes): “When we speak about the common good, we often mean the set of goods or conditions in a political community that best supports the flourishing of each person in the community” (Robert G. Kennedy, 2010).

Since liberal education is directed above all to developing students’ capacities for judgment in theoretical and practical contexts, it is fitting, first, that the outcomes for learning in the light of “common good” (or, perhaps better, “common goods”) stress reflection and judgment on the ends of human action in principle (learning outcomes #1 and #2) and in the concrete (learning outcomes #2 and #3). It is fitting; second, that students be invited (as they are in learning outcome #2) to offer reflection and judgment in variety of mediums that manifest the different ways we pursue the goods achievable by human endeavor. The requirement that students must complete only two of these outcomes enables the goal to be met in a variety of ways, including purely theoretical courses (fulfilling outcomes #1 and #2) and courses about concrete social problems (fulfilling outcomes #2 and #3). In any situation, students will have to critically analyze questions of social justice, which are raised from differing angles by both outcomes #2 and #3. Finally, these outcomes require students to explore one or more notions of the common good (in outcomes #1 and #2), which may include, but will not necessarily include, Catholic Social Teaching. [UEPC adopted]

**Implementation:** All of the goals within Engaging the World respond to broad areas of concern that flow out of the Saint Mary’s mission. Thus, students and faculty should have a wide degree of freedom (under the oversight of the Core Curriculum Committee) in seeking ways to explore these areas in the SMC curriculum. In particular, courses and experiences that fulfill the Common Good goals will often fulfill other goals, i.e., double-dipping is encouraged. [CCIC]
American Diversity (Engaging the World)

Learning Goal: The dignity of the human person is a foundational belief of the Catholic faith. We live, study, and work in an increasingly diverse American society. Therefore, in the core curriculum students will be asked to intellectually engage with social, cultural, economic, and political diversity in the United States. They will understand what it means to be civically engaged in diverse communities and to work cooperatively in diverse workplaces. [AS]

Learning Outcomes: Students will
1. Analyze aspects of social diversity (e.g., ethnicity, race, socio-economic status, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, ability, and political identity) and how it affects American society; and
2. Explain how social categories and structures of power may affect the human person. [UEPC considered]

Rationale (i.e., the intention of the proposed outcomes): By diversity we mean any of the myriad of ways that people within the United States differ, with the most important examples listed. We intend the wording to be interpreted inclusively, to include sociological, political, historical or anthropological approaches to diversity. All courses on diversity should have a comparative element, e.g., studying gender categories of women in comparison to those of men, racial categories of African-Americans in comparison to those of whites, Latinos, etc., economic categories of the working poor in comparison to the upper-middle class.

Diversity is not a neutral phenomenon. Social categories and differentiation have both positive and negative consequences. The positives can include the formation of one's identity, group solidarity, and a greater richness to the human experience. Negatives may include exclusion, unearned privilege, inequities, and injustice. The language of the goal recognizes this value element of diversity by rooting it in the Catholic understanding of human dignity. Outcome #2 requires that every course or experience fulfilling American Diversity must address the value element of diversity as it affects the human person. The language is intentionally broad, allowing for study that focuses on the positives, negatives, or both. [UEPC considered]

Implementation: All of the goals within Engaging the World respond to broad areas of concern that flow out of the Saint Mary’s mission. Thus, students and faculty should have a wide degree of freedom (under the oversight of the Core Curriculum Committee) in seeking ways to explore these areas in the SMC curriculum. In particular, courses and experiences that fulfill the American Diversity goals will often fulfill other goals, i.e., double-dipping is encouraged. [CCIC]
Global Perspective (Engaging the World)

**Learning Goal:** In today’s interdependent world, college graduates need to work with people and communities from across the globe. This work will depend upon many factors, not the least of which is the understanding of a foreign language. Through the core curriculum, students will study and compare the social, economic, religious, and political structures of different global communities and cultures, and gain an understanding of the interdependence of these communities. [AS]

**Learning Outcomes:** Students will
1. Analyze the process of globalization by using different theoretical perspectives and debates on a broad range of issues (including issues of dependence and interdependence); or
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the world from a specific non-American and non-Western European viewpoint. [UEPC considered]

**Rationale** (i.e., the intention of the proposed outcomes): Global Perspective can be understood in two different, but equally important, ways. First (as in outcome #1), it can be taken as a perspective that views the whole world at once (i.e., from a bird’s eye perspective), focusing on the interdependence of multiple cultures in this global context. In this outcome, “globalization” is taken in its largest sense, as synonymous with the process of growing global interdependence. Second (as in outcome #2), it can be taken as a particular, non-Western perspective on the world – in essence, a global diversity outcome. The former would include, for example, courses on global economics, the spread of cultural or artistic traditions across the globe, and properly-structured study-abroad experiences. The latter would include any number of courses in globally-diverse cultures and topics, such as African literature, Asian history, or Eastern religions. Students fulfill their Global Perspective requirement by completing an approved course or experience in *either* one of these two areas. [UEPC considered]

**Implementation:** Global Perspective courses must satisfy one of the two outcomes. All of the goals within Engaging the World respond to broad areas of concern that flow out of the Saint Mary’s mission. Thus, students and faculty should have a wide degree of freedom (under the oversight of the Core Curriculum Committee) in seeking ways to explore these areas in the SMC curriculum. In particular, courses and experiences that fulfill the Global Perspective goals will often fulfill other goals, i.e., double-dipping is encouraged. [CCIC]
Community Engagement (Engaging the World)

Learning Goal: The core curriculum gives students an engaging, intellectual experience. The Community Engagement goal also requires them to leave the classroom and engage with the world - to apply their intellectual experiences to communities beyond the academy. Students will actively and critically reflect upon these experiences and integrate them in their academic understanding of the world. [AS]

Learning Outcomes: Students will
1. Apply academic methods and/or theories benefit in a community setting in a way that promotes collaboration and mutual; and
2. Demonstrate critical reflection throughout their experience; and
3. Express their understanding of the interconnections between their experience and their responsibilities as members of social or professional communities. [UEPC adopted]

Rationale (i.e., the intention of the proposed outcomes): Community Engagement is to be understood broadly as students engaging their academic learning with one or more partners in the community. Outcome #1 requires that Community Engagement be an academic experience. The term “community” is to be understood as broadly as possible, as any group of persons outside of the classroom. (Examples of such communities would include an elementary school in which a student might be teaching, a political organization, the SMC community or some section of it, an AIDS shelter, a financial institution, an engineering facility, a hospital, a prison, etc.) Outcome #1 also requires that the student partner with one of these communities in a way that responds to articulated community priorities and demonstrates a spirit of reciprocity. In outcome #2, “critical reflection” includes constructive observation, intellectual exploration, and recognition of the complexity of learning. Outcome #3 attempts to create space for students to integrate their learning, requiring that students reflect on the implications of their experience for their lives as citizens and members of community. [UEPC adopted]

Implementation: All of the goals within Engaging the World respond to broad areas of concern that flow out of the Saint Mary’s mission. Thus, students and faculty should have a wide degree of freedom (under the oversight of the Core Curriculum Committee) in seeking ways to explore these areas in the SMC curriculum. In particular, courses and experiences that fulfill the Community Engagement goals will often fulfill other goals, i.e., double-dipping is encouraged. [CCIC]
Comparison of existing general education requirements 
and the new Core Curriculum

N.B. This document comes from the CCIC, and has no ‘official’ standing. It is not up for discussion, but is present to provide context.

The Core Curriculum attempts to meet the new learning goals in a way that preserves much of the current core structure. However, there are significant changes in most elements of the existing core. Below are some of the relations between the old and new core curriculums.

**Collegiate Seminar:** Four Collegiate Seminar courses are required of students who enter as first year students, one taken each academic year. These students will take their first two seminars the spring and fall of their first and second years, respectively. (A small number of majors are permitted exceptions to this scheduling.) Transfer students are expected to take one Collegiate Seminar class for each year in residence at the college.

N.B.: The structure of the Collegiate Seminar is currently being reviewed with a particular eye toward the role Seminar will play in the new Core Curriculum.

**Composition:** English 4 and 5 are maintained, with English 4 being taken in the fall of the students first year and English 5 in the spring of the students second year. (Again, there will be a small number of exceptions.) Students are also required to take an upper division course within their major with a writing component. This course must be approved as meeting the Writing and Oral Communication outcomes, and the Information Evaluation and Research Practices outcomes, at an upper division level and in a manner appropriate for the major.

**Theology and Religious Studies:** Students are required to take two classes which together satisfy the Theological Understanding learning goal.

**January Term:** January Term plays an important role in the core curriculum by providing an opportunity for faculty and students to enjoy innovative classes outside of their normal area of study. At the same time, Jan Term is an excellent location for courses that satisfy the Engaging the World learning goals.

**Language Requirement:** Students are required to complete (the equivalent of) three college-level semesters of a non-English language. These courses may not be counted toward an area requirement.

**The Area Requirements:** A breadth of courses across various disciplines both exposes students to different types of thinking and views of the world and provides a mechanism for meeting the new learning goals. The new core curriculum reorganizes the area requirements in order to best satisfy the new learning outcomes, to create breadth of study, and to protect disciplinary expertise, defining these areas according to the learning goals rather than by department. These area requirements are not to be satisfied in January Term, but they may double-dip with a student’s
major or minor. Only courses that have been approved by the Core Curriculum Committee as satisfying the learning goals may be counted as area course.

**Artistic Understanding:** Two courses which satisfy the Artistic Understanding learning goal. A student may not double-dip between their language requirement and their Artistic Understanding requirement.

**Mathematical Understanding:** One course which satisfies the Mathematical Understanding learning goal.

**Scientific Understanding:** Two courses which satisfy the Scientific Understanding learning goal.

**Social, Historical, and Cultural Understanding:** Two courses which satisfy the Social, Historical, and Cultural Understanding learning goal.
Core Curriculum Committee

N.B. This document was approved by the UEPC, and a draft of it by the Academic Senate. It is not up for discussion, but is present to provide context.

I. Overall Structure
Core Curriculum Committee (CCC)

- 1 Director of the Core Curriculum
  - Will be a tenured, undergraduate faculty member chosen for a multi-year term
    - The initial director will be selected by a search committee made up of two members each of the Senate, UEPC, and CCIC. This initial director will be appointed for a 5-year term.\(^1\)
  - Subsequent directors will serve for 3-year terms on the recommendation of the CCC, the Senate, and the UEPC
  - Will chair the CCC.

- 6 ranked, undergraduate faculty members
  - 2 from each SOLA, SOS, and 1 from SEBA, each elected by ranked faculty in that school, and 1 selected from ranked faculty at-large
  - Elected for 3-year, staggered terms
  - The structure to be reevaluated on a 3 year cycle.

- Permanent ex-officio & non-voting members
  - 1 Vice Provost for Undergraduate Academics or designee
  - 1 Vice Provost for Student Life or designee
  - 1 Registrar or designee
  - 1 student chosen by ASSMC.

- Temporary (roll-out phase) ex-officio & non-voting members
  - 1 Dean of Advising or designee
  - 1 Director of Institutional Research (or Director of Assessment, when hired), or designee
  - 1 representative from the library as designated by the Dean for Academic Resources.

Working Groups

7 working subcommittees, each consisting of a Chair, who is a member of the CCC, and 4 faculty

- Group HM (Habits of Mind):
- Group MS (Math and Science):
- Group AU (Artistic Understanding):
- Group TU (Theological Understanding):
- Group HC (Historical, Social, and Cultural Understanding):
- Group CG/CE (Common Good/Community Engagement):
- Group AD/GP (American Diversity/Global Perspectives):

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\(^1\) The CCIC recommends that a call for nominations go forth at the end of January Term and that the search committee conduct the interviews and make a selection during February 2011.
The working group chairs are designated by the CCC once elections are completed. In most cases, the Director will chair Group HM, as this area will involve a great deal of collaboration with Collegiate Seminar, Composition, and the majors. The two faculty members on each working group are recommended to the Senate by the CCC, after consultation with the Deans and Departments/Programs, and are to be a mix of disciplinary experts and interested non-experts. Faculty members may self-nominate for consideration for any working group. Immediately after the completion of the regular election process, the CCC will convene to do the selection process for the working groups. The working group members are appointed to 2-year, staggered terms.

II. Duties
N.B. The Core Curriculum is defined as the foundational and essential learning expected of all students at Saint Mary's College (as articulated in the learning goals and outcomes) and the processes by which students achieve that learning (i.e., approved courses and other experiences.)

Of the Core Curriculum Committee
• To address any and all policy issues regarding the Core Curriculum and its Learning Goals and outcomes
• To establish seven working groups, based on the Learning Goals for the Core, for the purpose of receiving and reviewing course proposals for the meeting of specific Learning Goals and recommending courses to the CCC for inclusion in the College’s Core Curriculum
• To develop general guidelines that govern the work of the seven CCC working groups for the course review and approval process
• To review the recommendations of the seven CCC working groups concerning the approval of courses as meeting Core Goals and the removal of courses that no longer meet the requirements as set by the CCC, and to respond to faculty per those recommendations
• To be responsible for catalog language for the core and to publish a yearly listing of the courses that satisfy the learning goals
• To develop policies for student issues and petitions regarding the meeting of Core Goals
• To evaluate the policies, overall structure, and specific components of the Core, including Learning Goals, Outcomes and Rationales, on a rotating schedule, and to make recommendations to the Senate for any needed changes, based on assessment measures and evaluations supervised by the CCC
• To stay informed of general education trends and best practices, as regards goals, outcomes, structure, and assessment
• To assist faculty in understanding the CCC guidelines for course approval and to facilitate the submission of course proposals by working with appropriate Deans, Department/Program Chairs and Directors, and individual faculty

Of the CCC Working groups
• To perform the initial review of courses proposed to meet the learning goals of the Core Curriculum and to recommend approval/disapproval of those courses to the CCC
• To review previously approved Core Curriculum courses on the five-year anniversary of their previous approval and to recommend re-approval/disapproval of those courses to the CCC
The working groups of the CCC assist the CCC in carrying out its responsibilities regarding courses serving the Core Curriculum; as such, their work is guided by and subject to the authority of the CCC. Guidelines for the approval and review process are determined by the CCC, with input from the working groups as appropriate. The working groups make recommendations to the CCC, which has the final authority to approve those recommendations or to send them back to the working group for further consideration.

III. Relationship to other faculty committees:
The CCC is an independent committee that operates under the Academic Senate’s larger responsibility for the college’s academic program. All CCC recommendations regarding the process by which the CCC operates will be forwarded to the Senate for approval. Decisions regarding approval or disapproval of individual courses (or student petitions) pertaining to the learning goals fall within the purview of the CCC and are not reviewed elsewhere. The CCC will issue an annual report to the Senate of its work and decisions. Where there are potential conflicts or overlapping of responsibilities between the UEPC, AARC, and CCC, the Senate will define the appropriate parameters of each group’s authority and responsibility.

IV. Workload considerations and Administrative Support

The Director of the Core Curriculum will have a three-course reassignment of his/her teaching duties. There will also be a full-time administrative assistant to support the Director, the CCC, and the 7 working groups. (A job description for the administrative support will be drafted in spring, 2011.)

Due to the exceptional workload anticipated during the initial period of implementation of the new Core, the initial members of the CCC will receive a course release in each year of CCC service; once the Core has been fully implemented, the Director of CCC, the Chair of the Academic Senate, the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Academics, and the Provost will meet to determine if the level of service expected of a member of the CCC demands continued compensation.

Support for the initial members of the working groups will be through direct stipends, to be determined in consultation with the Provost; once the Core has been fully implemented, the Director of CCC, the Chair of the Academic Senate, the Vice Provost for Academics, and the Provost will meet to determine the appropriate level of support for faculty members from that point forward.

V. Course Approval Process and Assessment

The CCIC will be forwarding to the UEPC a second set of recommendations concerning the process of course approval and the issues of assessment. For now, we simply note that the CCC as proposed will oversee assessment in terms of policy and evaluation of data, but will not be actually conducting assessment procedures itself. We will likely be recommending the creation of an “assessment position/office” at the College for all the operational aspects of this part of the process, but we have not finalized those recommendations.
Position Description and Duties: Director of the Core Curriculum

N.B. This document was approved by the UEPC. It is not up for discussion, but is present to provide context.

The Director of the Core Curriculum Committee is a tenured undergraduate faculty member who is chosen for a multi-year term to oversee the Core Curriculum, and who serves at the pleasure of the Academic Senate. The first Director will be selected in the spring of 2011 by a search committee made up of two members each from the Academic Senate, the UEPC, and the CCIC. Subsequent Directors will be determined by the Academic Senate, based on the nomination of the executive committee of the Academic Senate, the chair of the Undergraduate Educational Policies Board and the out-going Director of the Core Curriculum. The initial Director’s term will be five years, with subsequent Directors serving three-year terms. The Director will receive three course-equivalent reassigned times each academic year.

The duties of the Director of the Core Curriculum are as follows:

1. Chair and provide leadership of the Core Curriculum Committee, ensuring that it fulfills its mandated responsibilities.
2. Establish the seven Core Curriculum Committee working groups based on Core Goals and supervise the selection of faculty to fill those positions, with the assistance of the other CCC faculty members.
3. Address procedural and policy issues that arise in regard to the day-to-day operation of the Core program.
4. Keep abreast of national trends in general education, and initiate consideration of needed reforms in the SMC Core Curriculum Program.
5. Adjudicate student issues and petitions regarding Core Requirements.
6. Maintain lists of courses that satisfy particular goals and provide appropriate entries in the Catalog of Courses to guide students and faculty regarding Core requirements.
7. Work with department chairs, program directors, and deans to assure equitable staffing from the various units that are involved in providing courses for the Core.
8. Develop and direct workshops to stimulate good teaching in the Core Curriculum Program and to provide a coherent professional development component for faculty teaching in the Core.
9. Develop budget plans and oversee budget expenditures for the program.
10. Supervise any staff who provide administrative support for the CCC.
11. Report as required to the Academic Senate and to the Provost on matters concerning the Core Curriculum Program, such as curriculum, assessment of learning, staffing, budget, and implementation components.
13. Supervise, in collaboration with the CCC, the rotating schedule of regular review of the policies, overall structure, and specific components of the Core, and make recommendations to the Academic Senate for any needed changes, based on assessment measures and evaluations supervised by the CCC.
The Disciplinary Expertise requirement for Core Curriculum courses

N.B. This document was available to Academic Senate by the CCIC. It is not up for discussion, but is present to provide context.

Rationale: The faculty at SMC desire to preserve and enhance the rigor of the disciplinary ways of knowing in the core curriculum by requiring that all faculty teaching courses that meet these disciplinary goals (#5 -- #8) possess the appropriate disciplinary expertise.

Definition: Disciplinary expertise is taken to mean that a faculty member has sufficient academic training and/or experience in a disciplinary field to educate students in that field at a substantive, collegiate level.

Guidelines:

• The requirement of disciplinary expertise on behalf of the instructor applies only to faculty submitting courses for goals #5--#8 (Mathematical and Scientific Understanding, Artistic Understanding, Theological Understanding, and Social, Historical, and Cultural Understanding). The Habits of Mind (#1--#4) and Engaging the World (#9--#12) goals are intentionally designed to be foundational and cross-disciplinary, extending throughout the college’s curriculum.

• It is assumed that a faculty member teaching in a department that matches the disciplinary areas meets the criterion of disciplinary expertise. E.g., it is assumed that a faculty member teaching in the department of Sociology has disciplinary expertise in the discipline of Social, Historical, and Cultural Understanding. As such, no further demonstration of disciplinary expertise is required.

  o Corollary point: If, for example, the Sociology department is willing to cross-list the course of another member of the faculty in another department, that action will “certify” the disciplinary expertise of said faculty member in the discipline of Social, Historical, and Cultural Understanding. The same would apply to all of goals #5--#8.

• A faculty member teaching outside of the standard department for a discipline (e.g., a philosopher teaching theology in the Philosophy department) and whose course is not cross-listed has the responsibility to demonstrate disciplinary expertise when submitting courses to the Core Curriculum Committee. Such demonstration must take one of two forms:

  o An advanced degree in the discipline, e.g., an advanced degree in a social science or history in order to teach a course in Social, Historical, and Cultural Understanding

  o Substantive scholarly production in the discipline, e.g., a publication history in the social sciences or a production history in the arts

• Due to the intentionally integrative (and exceptional) nature of the Integral Program, tutors in the program are deemed to be qualified to teach learning goals #5--#8 in Integral courses. (This certification applies only to courses within the Integral Program, not courses offered in the rest of the college’s curriculum, for which the same guidelines would apply as listed above.)
CCIC Working Assumptions
(not otherwise stated)

N.B. This document comes from the CCIC, and has no 'official' standing. It is not up for discussion, but is present to provide context.

1. There will have to be a yearly listing of which courses fulfill which learning goals, published somewhere (CCC guidebook? Catalog of Courses?) To be printed by April 1st, the CCC must complete its work by March 1st, and, hence, do the majority of course approval the previous fall. Each course will indicate when it is offered (F, J or S).
2. The Core Curriculum Committee (CCC) will oversee the approval of courses for the core curriculum. Departments/Deans will no longer have this responsibility. Some January Term courses will need both JT and CCC approval.
3. The CCC will need to have some overview of travel courses, at least those courses that satisfy a LG/LO.
4. The (current) diversity requirement is replaced by the Global Perspectives and American Diversity requirements.
5. Since meeting learning goals is an academic question, academic credit should be awarded. In particular, when a Learning Goal is being met by “experience plus reflection”, a .25 credit should be given.
6. Departments are encouraged to have a ‘no pre-requisite’ rule for Core Curriculum courses (with Seminar 2, 3, 4 and English 5 and upper division writing being exceptions).
7. The language requirement remains a graduation requirement. (It is not clear where precisely it should fit into the document above describing the core.)
8. The new CCC and the AARC will need to determine which learning goals are satisfied by which AP courses.