

**The University of Texas at Arlington
Undergraduate Assembly
Minutes
October 16, 2012**

The Undergraduate Assembly met in regular session on Tuesday, October 16, 2012 at 2:15 p.m. in the UC Rio Grande. Vice Provost for Academic Affairs David Silva presided.

	Present	Excused	Absent	Alternate
Ronald Elsenbaumer		x		
Michael Moore **		x		
Amy Austin	x			
Jean-Pierre Bardet			x	
Barbara Becker			x	
David Bernard			x	
Rebecca Bichel **			x	
Beverly Black **	x			
Alaina Cardwell **	x			
Mary Cazzell	x			
C. Y. Choi	x			
Phil Cohen **		x		
Manfred Cuntz	x			
Dana Dunn		x		Shelley Smith
James Epperson	x			
Sergio Espinosa	x			
Norma Figueroa	x			
Jennifer Fox			x	
Perry Fuchs	x			
Donald Gatzke			x	
Jeanne Gerlach		x		John Smith
David Gray			x	
Todd Hamilton			x	
Jongyun Heo	x			
Laureano Hoyos	x			
Holly Hungerford-Kresser	x			
Pamela Jansma	x			
Richard Jimmerson **	x			
Dee Mackey		x		Susan Justice
Albert Marichal	x			
Gladys Maryol	x			
Jeff McGee	x			
Andrew Milson	x			
Diane Mitschke			x	
Ellen Murphy			x	
Helen Myers	x			
Karl Petruso **			x	
Elizabeth Poster		x		Jean Ashwill
Jaime Rogers	x			
Scott Ryan			x	
Salil Sarkar	x			
Brent Sasley			x	
Antoinette Sol **	x			
Jackie Stodnick			x	

Chunke Su	x			
Larry Watson			x	
James Welch			x	
Jim Williams	x			
Judy Wilson	x			
Beth Wright	x			
Gergely Zaruba	x			

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the regular meeting on September 11, 2012 were approved as published.

Agenda Items Approved by the Committee on Undergraduate Curricula

College of Liberal Arts:

Department of English

Add/Course Change

ENGL 4341, 4342 – split into two courses - too much material to cover adequately in one course

Department of History

Add Course

GEOG 1303 – World Regional Geography - course required for teacher certification.

College of Science:

Department of Physics

Add Course

PHYS 3341 – Biological Physics

Kimberly Van Noort presented the following items for consideration by the Undergraduate Assembly. Motion to approve proposed agenda items. All Items were approved.

Undergraduate Core Curriculum Revisions

(Please refer to attached handout “Undergraduate Core Curriculum Revisions at UT Arlington”.)

(Kimberly Van Noort) Updating the core curriculum has been mandated by the Coordinating Board and the University has this academic year to decide how the core curriculum will be modified.

An ad hoc committee that consisted of five representatives from the School of Architecture, the College of Science, the College of Liberal Arts, the College of Nursing and the Provost’s office made preliminary recommendations that were brought before the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee. The discussion that ensued within the committee resulted in the handout that was presented to the Undergraduate Assembly (see attached handout).

This was an informative session only. No vote was taken. Discussion was encouraged as a plan must be ready to send to Austin by September 2013 even though it will not go into effect until September 2014. The one big change that was discussed was the new reporting and the assessment requirements for the core curriculum. It will be much more formalized and stringent. There will be more discussion at the first Undergraduate Assembly spring meeting and then the final vote will be at the last spring meeting.

Question was asked about current core curriculum.

(David Silva) Current Core Curriculum:

44 student credit hours - divided among a number of areas:

- 6 hours of Communications
- 6 hours of Mathematics
- 8 hours of Life and Physical Science (proposed 6 hours under the new core)
- 3 hours Liberal Arts elective
- 3 hours Fine Arts
- 6 hours American History (mandated by state legislation)
- 6 hours Government/Political Science (mandated by state legislation)
- 3 hours Social/Cultural Science
- 3 hours Literature

The new core can only have 42 hours and needs to be trimmed by two hours.

The core curriculum areas on page one are cross referenced with the core objectives on the top of page two in table. Note that each component areas require that students be exposed to four of the objective areas. Every component area will require students be exposed to critical thinking and communication and then the other four (empirical & quantitative, teamwork, social responsibility, and personal responsibility) are divided up among the other component areas. (Refer to attached handout.)

Example: If you teach a course in American History, which is part of the core, you must provide your students with training, education and skills development in critical thinking, communication, social responsibility, and personal responsibility.

(David Silva) The component areas have been given to every community college, college, and university in the state. There is no negotiation room. Optional objectives can be included in the component areas, but it is not recommended.

Discussion ensued about whether the components would need to be assessed. It was concluded that the University must be prepared to present assessment data that shows how students have acquired these particular objectives that have been mandated. This will be at a program level and not a course level.

There was some discussion on whether one course could just meet one of the objectives. Every course will need to meet all the core objectives.

Example: Every course that is part of the core in Creative Arts will form a consortium. They will need to agree on how to assess critical thinking, communication, teamwork and social responsibility in the creative arts classes.

Discussion ensued about whether there would be more communication between departments and colleges. One of the desired objectives is that there is more coordination among those that teach within the core.

Coordinating Board Mandates (Refer to page three of handout)

- 42 Core Hours – We cannot increase the total number of credit hours it takes for a student to earn a degree.
- Skills building courses of the college transition type will not be allowed in the core.
- Assessment must come at the curriculum level, not the course level.
- There is an expectation that whatever plan the University comes up with will be assessed by qualified assessment expert peers.

Common Sense (Refer to page three of handout)

- This has been delivered by the legislature and by the Coordinating Board under the header of transforming/transformation.
- It is understood by the University that it will take time and effort to implement change.
- The University is looking for ways and ideas to adhere to the Coordinating Board mandates in a way that makes sense for a large institution.

Discussion ensued about whether it meant the two hour reduction in the core curriculum meant the departments could take the two hours back. The departments will get the two hours back.

The discussion continued as to whether the 120 hour degree plan would become a more firm limit. David Silva answered that in context to a \$10,000 undergraduate degree; he sees it as more firm limit. There will always be exceptions, but one would need to be prepared to make a really good case for future exceptions.

(Kimberly Van Noort) The point of contention in the current core is the lab life science courses. To maintain those four hour lab courses, then those two extra hours must be removed from the six hour free for all. Currently, math and literature are in those two spots. Removing one of those would leave one credit hour, which is problematic.

College of Science was approached and came up with a creative solution:

- Creating some specific core lab science class which would only carry three hours.
- They would not be the courses science, engineering, or anthropology majors would be required to take.
- They would be more general purpose core classes that would then give us the three credit hours.

Discussion ensued about the different classes offered for majors and non majors. The way the college envisions the course is that they lose the credit hour in the formal lecture interaction because it is felt that keeping the hands on activities that are associated with labs is very important, particularly because this is the only time students get this type of experience.

It was also discussed that if a student was not a major but then decided to go into a science major, the college would come up with a one or two credit specific laboratory class to cover the topics in depth that needed to be covered additionally so that someone could transition from a non major to a science major.

(David Silva) The extent to which the core curriculum overlaps with the requirements of your major is an economy. It's an economy that's built into the current system. The intent is not to deprive any one of that economy, but it will probably not be provided in the same way. There will be a mismatch because of students changing majors. Science is very graciously offering a way for student's to stay up to speed. It is also believed that this will help with transfer students.

Discussion ensued about maintaining the lab experience and dropping the lecture hour. It was again stated that what was proposed was to drop the lecture hour and maintain the lab experience and this was felt very strongly as the best plausible solution.

Point was raised that we could reduce credit hours without reducing contact hours, so that students who did decide to switch to science majors would not be behind. Pamela Jansma, Dean of Science, acknowledged, that this and other options were being reviewed.

(David Silva) No one is removing the right of the major to change the requirements. However, there is a disjunction of the numbers whereas before the economy of coincidence was easy to maintain: eight hours of core science, eight hours in the major. It can still work. It is not the intent to water down the requirements of any major. The intent is that there are core basic requirements that every student needs to walk out the door with.

Question was raised about the time scale. It is to be implemented by Fall 2014, but needs to be ready by Fall 2013 for review. All of the online degree plans have to be updated by Fall 2014.

Discussion ensued about contact to credit hours. Point was raised that it was not fair to decrease credit hours but maintain same workload as was brought up earlier in meeting. Pamela Jansma, Dean of Science, concluded that the contact hours will be reduced, so that will reduce the content.

David Silva brought up the point of mapping contact hours to credit hours. There is no clear cut formula. Yet SACS has been very clear, that when our five year interim report is submitted in February it include a clear discussion on how the University maps contact hours to credit hours. It is an issue that needs clarity and it has been raised from two different directions (student and instructor).

Discussion ensued about what courses were needed for engineering degrees (literature, labs, etc.).

(Kimberly Van Noort) There will be a new policy and procedure where everyone is going to have to reapply to be in the core curriculum, for example, this course fits in Language, Philosophy & Culture. Then you will need to explain why. We will need to know which course fits into which slot. There will be meetings to explain the new policy and procedure.

Question was raised about how you apply the core objectives of teamwork and social responsibility to the component area of Creative Arts. It is not a trivial question. There are guidelines from the American Association of Colleges and Universities as part of their transforming education initiative that discusses these issues.

David Silva expanded on this question: How do you teach it? What does it mean? It is going to go beyond basic music appreciation. What it is in the construction of a performance that requires teamwork and what an average undergraduate needs to know so that when he or she goes to hear a concert has a higher appreciation for that cultural aspect because they have learned about the importance of the teamwork that is happening on stage?

(David Silva) The point is to be expedient and common sense about this yet still see the potential for transformation. Use this mandate as a challenge to show the coordinating board how smart and how creative the University is.

(Kimberly Van Noort) In the short term, the University wants to maintain the three hours of literature in response to accreditation issues. However, this is still up for discussion.

It is felt that common and unifying experiences are important to our students and so there was discussion on teaching intellectual foundations of disciplines in different areas, for example, Intellectual Foundations of the Humanities, of the Sciences, of Engineering, of Healthcare, etc. These would be courses that would be heavy in critical thinking and communication skills with an introduction to general disciplinary areas. (Also, maintain if engineers needed a literary component, their students could take Intellectual Foundations of Literature.)

Discussion ensued about community colleges, colleges and universities having to conform to the same curriculum. There was some discussion if this was going to apply to out of state institutions and transfer in students. The resulting conclusion was no.

The assembly was encouraged to email questions, comments, and feedback to Kim Van Noort or David Silva.

If no other business motion to adjourn, seconded.

Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 3:05 p.m.

Michael K. Moore
Secretary
MKM; mz

Undergraduate Core Curriculum Revisions at UT Arlington Preliminary Planning Fall 2012

The Institutional Task

Beginning in the fall semester 2014, each of the state's publicly supported colleges and universities must implement the new Core Curriculum. Changes to the Core are mandated by recent changes in the *Texas Administrative Code*, Title 19: Education, Part 1: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, Chapter 4: Rules Applying to All Public Institutions of Higher Education in Texas, Subchapter B: Transfer of Credit, Core Curriculum and Field of Study Curricula ([http://info.sos.state.tx.us/pls/pub/readtac\\$ext.ViewTAC?tac_view=5&ti=19&pt=1&ch=4&sch=B&rl=Y](http://info.sos.state.tx.us/pls/pub/readtac$ext.ViewTAC?tac_view=5&ti=19&pt=1&ch=4&sch=B&rl=Y)).

In preparing for this change, UT Arlington must revise its current Core Curriculum so that it aligns with the TAC's revised Core Curriculum (see below). In addition, UT Arlington's faculty and administration must develop a comprehensive plan for assessing student mastery of the new Core Curriculum's "Core Objectives" as addressed in each of the new Core Curriculum's "Component Areas."

Moreover, any revisions to the Core Curriculum should be consistent with (if not directly supportive of) the University's soon-to-be adopted Strategic Plan for 2012-2020.

Structure of the New Core Curriculum

The revised Core Curriculum is perhaps most effectively understood in terms of a nine-by-six matrix in which the vertical axis consists of the core's eight "Foundational Component Areas" and the horizontal axis consists of the curriculum's six "Core Objectives."

Component Areas. The Core's Component Areas represent broadly-defined academic domains in which *all* undergraduate students should be able to demonstrate a basic college-level understanding.

Every institution's Core Curriculum must include the following Foundational Component Areas:

1. Communication.....6 SCH
2. Mathematics3 SCH
3. Life and Physical Sciences.....6 SCH
4. Language, Philosophy and Culture3 SCH
5. Creative Arts3 SCH
6. American History6 SCH
7. Government / Political Science.....6 SCH
8. Social / Behavioral Science3 SCH

In addition, each institution's Core Curriculum must include an additional 6 SCH of courses designated as "Component Area Options" (which replace the current core's "Institutionally Designated Options"). Each institution may establish its own CAOs, with the understanding that these options must be closely linked to the common set of eight FCAs (above).

Core Objectives. The six Core Objectives represent the “principles of personal and social responsibility for living in a diverse world” as well as the “intellectual and practical skills that are essential for all learning,” and – one might add – for fostering a spirit of “lifelong learning.” The six Core Objectives are:

1. Critical Thinking
2. Communication
3. Empirical and Quantitative Skills
4. Teamwork
5. Social Responsibility
6. Personal Responsibility

The conceptual framework of the new Core Curriculum assumed fuller shape when the six Core Objectives were mapped to the Component Areas (Table 1).

As indicated in Table 1, two of the six Core Objectives have been mapped to all of the Component Areas (FCAs and CAOs alike): Critical Thinking and Communication. The remaining Core Objectives have been strategically mapped to the Component Areas such that each Component Area must address no more than four Core Objectives.

Table 1: Core Objectives Mapped to Component Areas

For courses that satisfy the requirement of a particular Component Area, we must be able to demonstrate the degree to which students enrolled in those courses have acquired/mastered the corresponding Core Objectives. Note: The relationships between the Component Areas and the Core Objectives have been established and approved by the THECB; they are not negotiable.

		Core Objectives (6)					
		Critical Thinking	Commu- nication	Empirical & Quantitative	Teamwork	Social Respons.	Personal Respons.
Component Areas	COMMUNICATION	required	required	<i>optional</i>	required	<i>optional</i>	required
	MATHEMATICS	required	required	required	<i>optional</i>	<i>optional</i>	<i>optional</i>
	LIFE & PHYSICAL SCIENCE	required	required	required	required	<i>optional</i>	<i>optional</i>
	LANGUAGE, PHILOSOPHY & CULTURE	required	required	<i>optional</i>	<i>optional</i>	required	required
	CREATIVE ARTS	required	required	<i>optional</i>	required	required	<i>optional</i>
	AMERICAN HISTORY	required	required	<i>optional</i>	<i>optional</i>	required	required
	GOVERNMENT/ POLITICAL SCIENCE	required	required	<i>optional</i>	<i>optional</i>	required	required
	SOCIAL/BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE	required	required	required	<i>optional</i>	required	<i>optional</i>
	COMPONENT AREA OPTIONS	required	required	<i>TBD</i>	<i>TBD</i>	<i>TBD</i>	<i>TBD</i>

Initial Parameters for Designing and Implementing the New Core Curriculum

At this early stage in process of revising the Core, at least two parameters have emerged as fundamentally important.

1. ***Conforming to Coordinating Board Mandates.*** UT Arlington's revised Core must adhere to all requirements and policies promulgated by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). Of particular note are the following.
 - a. We must reduce the Core's SCHs from 44 to 42.
 - b. We may not revise the Core in way that would increase the total number of SCHs required to earn a degree.
 - c. We cannot include any courses in which the primary objective is to provide students with skills and strategies for making a successful transition into college; as such, the First Year Seminar program (as it is currently conceptualized) is not appropriate for inclusion in the new Core.
 - d. We must prepare to assess student learning outcomes for all of the new Core's Component Areas on a *curricular* level (and not simply as a matter of compiling potentially disparate course-by-course assessments as independently developed and administered by each faculty member). As a consequence, the planning and implementation of curriculum and assessment within each of the Component Areas must be coordinated across and within the academic units offering courses that satisfy requirements in that Component Area.
 - e. We must be prepared to have our proposed revision to the Core Curriculum evaluated by peer consultants prior to submitting it the THECB for official review and approval.
2. ***Adopting a Common Sense Approach to Curricular Transformation.*** While the intent behind the legislative mandate to revise the core is to foster educational transformation, we must remain cognizant of any potentially unanticipated consequences that might emerge as the result of this major curricular change. To this end, we must agree that common sense and compromise must prevail. Of particular note are the following initial matters of concern.
 - a. Continue to include an additional 3 SCHs of mathematics as part of UT Arlington's Core Curriculum under the Component Area Option.
 - b. Reduce the number of SCHs currently required in the area of Life and Physical Sciences from eight (8) to six (6) by reducing the credit hours granted for passing introductory science courses taught to/for non-science majors from four (4) to three (3).
 - c. Establish policies and procedures whereby academic units may request that specific courses be considered for inclusion on official lists of courses that satisfy the core curriculum requirements for the following Component Areas:
 - Language, Philosophy and Culture
 - Creative Arts
 - Social and Behavioral Science
 - d. In the short-term, maintain "Literature" as the second of our two Component Area Options, but...
 - e. In the long-term, seek creative solutions for developing a new Component Area Option that could reasonably subsume much of what is accomplished in/by the

current Literature component while also broadening this CAO's scope in a direction that fosters reflective reading, critical thinking, effective argumentation, and conscious metacognition.

One idea that has been advanced is to develop a limited set of "intellectual foundations" courses in which students would be introduced to some of the most influential ideas and texts of a particular domain of academic or professional theory and practice (as broadly and interdisciplinarily defined: e.g, humanities, social sciences, scientific inquiry, health care, entrepreneurship, design, justice). Common to *all* courses in the "intellectual foundations" curriculum would be a shared set of core objectives, etc.

It was further noted that exploring the development and implementation of the proposed "intellectual foundations" curriculum might be undertaken under the aegis of UT Arlington's Quality Enhancement Plan for the SACS-COC reaffirmation in 2017.

Issues to be Addressed

Preliminary discussions revealed the following initial issues of concern. There are certainly other matters that will arise (either now, soon, or eventually); members of the UCC are encouraged to voice such concerns as they reveal themselves.

Issue: When a Component Area's description includes multiple competencies (e.g., "Courses involved the command of oral, aural, written, and visual literacy skills..."), must each of the courses assigned to that Component Area address all competencies?

Recommendation: Explore this concern with the THECB staff.

Action: Silva will investigate.

Outcome: TBA.

Issue: Who will oversee the matter of assessment in the new Core?

Recommendation: Secure funds to hire a new assessment specialist who could assume responsibility for the developing, implementing, and reporting.

Action: Silva and Haws will present a proposal to the Provost.

Outcome: TBA.

Issue: How might be minimize the burden of assessing the core on faculty, chairs, and deans?

Recommendation: From the outset, encourage (or perhaps "insist upon") the use of digital technologies for gathering all core-related assessment data.

Action: In developing any assessment strategies, be sure to engage the leadership of the academic units, the Office of the Provost, the Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness, the Center for Distance Education, and the Office of Information Technology.

Outcome: TBA.

Issue: When assessing learning outcomes in each of the component areas, can we base our work on a sample extracted from the population of those students who provide performance data?

Recommendation: Investigate requirements and expectations established by the THECB to determine if sampling is possible; if so, sample.

Action: Silva will investigate.

Outcome: TBA.

Issue: How might we improve the likelihood that undergraduates will complete (most of) their core curriculum requirements during their foundational and formative lower-division years (and not putting the task off when also attempting to negotiate upper-division classes)?

Recommendation: Allow academic units to establish policies that require students to have completed at a minimum number of SCHs in the core before being allowed to enroll in their major's 3000- and 4000-level classes.

Example: Students majoring in _____ may not enroll in 3000- or 4000-level courses required for the major until they have earned at least 36 student credit hours that satisfy the University's core curriculum requirements.

Action: Have the UCC discuss (and, if deemed appropriate) develop a policy.

Outcome: TBA.

Issue: So that we may be ready to implement the new Core Curriculum by the fall of 2014 (as required by the THECB), what is our schedule for this project?

Recommendation: Adhere to the THECB's published recommendations as much as possible.

Action: Van Noort, Haws, and Silva will develop a timeline and present to the UCC for review and revision.

Outcome: TBA.