THE CHARGE OF THE TASKFORCE

“The core curriculum for all degrees offered by the College of Arts and Sciences will be evaluated when appropriate, at least once every ten to fifteen years by a committee of Arts and Sciences faculty members appointed by the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. This review will evaluate the size and content of the core curriculum in light of this vision statement. Following this review, the committee will make recommendations for revisions of the core curriculum to the Arts and Sciences Council of Chairs.”

College of Arts and Sciences Core Curriculum Vision, p. 4. Approved May 2016, Council of Chairs, College of Arts and Sciences

FEBRUARY 2, 2017: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Attendance

• The following members of the Executive Committee of the Taskforce were present: Tamarah Adair (BIO), Sara Alexander (ANT), Mark Anderson (ART), Michael Beaty (PHI), Joseph Brown (PSC), Blair Browning (COM), Julie deGraffenried (HIS), Stan Denman (THEA), Steven Driese (GEO SC), Chris Hansen (FDM), Jeanne Hill (STA), John Howard (alumni representative), Ken Jones (CLA), Kristin Koch (student representative), Heidi Marcum (ENV SC), Alex McNair (MLC), Carson Mencken (SOC), Brian Raines (MTH), Dwight Russell (PHY), Lisa Shaver (ENG), Sara Stone (JOU), Charles Weaver (PSY/NSC), Doug Weaver (REL). The following were unable to be present: Thomas McGrath (CHE).

• The following members of the Working Groups of the Taskforce were present: Frieda Blackwell, Burt Burleson, Gary Carter, Lana Conder, Kim Kellison, Deanne Kramer, Paul Martens, Joyce Miller, Wes Null, Viola Osborn, Ken Wilkins.

Proposals for Common Courses

• The model for the new core curriculum calls for common courses (that all students take) and distribution list courses (that students choose from). The 5 subcommittees met during the first three weeks of the semester to consider proposals for the common course area. A total of 13 proposals were received totaling 31 hours. 2 of the 5 subcommittees presented proposals on January 26. These included: ENG 1302: Thinking and Writing; ENG 1304: Thinking, Writing, and Research; PHI 1306: Logic; and PHI 23XX: Contemporary Ethical Issues; CSS 1301: Fundamentals of Public Communication; HIS 13XX: U.S. History in Global Perspective; CIV 31XX: Civic Engagement Seminar; and PSC 13XX: The U.S. Constitution, Its Interpretation, and the American Political Experience. New courses are in italics.
• Stan Denman, chair of the Creativity subcommittee, presented the following proposals: \textit{AQE 10XX: Quality Cultural Events (6 semesters)} and \textit{ENG 2310: British Literature}.

• Doug Weaver, co-chair of the Christian Tradition subcommittee, presented the following proposals: Chapel (2 semesters), REL 1310: Christian Scriptures, and REL 1350: Christian Heritage.

\textbf{Reports from Working Groups}

• Paul Martens presented a report from the \textit{Oversight-Integration Working Group}. The report addressed the question: \textit{do the proposed courses meet A&S Vision requirements?} It was noted that all proposed Common Courses demonstrate considerable merit and substantial support from the A&S Core Curriculum Vision Document but asked if there ways in which these proposed courses can be reconsidered, refined, and sharpened (and perhaps integrated) in a manner that avoids repetition? See enclosed PowerPoint.

• Viola Osborn presented a report from the \textit{Analytics-Budget Working Group}. The report addressed the question: \textit{how many sections of core courses need to be taught in each department in order that no faculty lines are added or subtracted?} Each department representative was given an analysis of potential impact on their department. See enclosed PowerPoint.

• Deanne Kramer and Joyce Miller presented a report from the \textit{Curriculum Development Working Group}. The report addressed questions related to course sequencing, flexibility, and management of the new core in relation to major requirements. This assessment was generally affirmative. See enclosed PowerPoint.

\textbf{Non-binding Straw Vote}

At the end of the meeting, the 24 members of the Executive Committee used secret ballots with the following results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Abstain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Departments</td>
<td>31XX Civics Engagement Seminar</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ART, FDM, THEA, MUS</td>
<td>10XX, 10XX, 20XX, 20XX, 30XX, 30XX Quality Cultural Events (6 semesters)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Life</td>
<td>Chapel Chapel (2 semesters)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM</td>
<td>CSS 1301 Fundamentals of Public Communication</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENG</td>
<td>ENG 1302 Thinking and Writing</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENG</td>
<td>ENG 1304 Thinking, Writing, and Research</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENG</td>
<td>ENG 2310 British Literature</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIS</td>
<td>HIS 13XX U.S. History in Global Perspective</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHI</td>
<td>PHI 13XX Introduction to Logic or Critical Thinking</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHI</td>
<td>PHI 23XX Contemporary Ethical Issues</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSC</td>
<td>PSC 13XX The U.S. Constitution, Its Interpretation, and the American Political Experience</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REL</td>
<td>REL 1310 Christian Scriptures</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REL</td>
<td>REL 1350 Christian Heritage</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
UPCOMING

February 3-9 Subcommittees meetings
• Revise common course proposals based on feedback from plenary meetings of January 26 and February 2
• Begin discussion on distribution list course rules

February 8 Steering Committee meeting with Dean
• Identifying consensus and disagreement on common course proposals

February 13-17 Subcommittees meetings
• Continued development of distribution list course rules

February 20-March 3 Luncheons for A&S Chairs and Executive Committee
• Each subcommittee has an opportunity to present arguments for inclusion of common courses or distribution list rules before the voting members of the taskforce and before A&S chairs.

March 14, 15, 20 Town hall meetings
• A&S faculty members are given opportunity to give feedback to steering committee members on proposals being considered

QUESTIONS REFERRED TO WORKING GROUPS

The following questions were asked at executive plenary, subcommittee, or working group meetings and have been referred to the working groups. The most recent questions are added to the end of the list in bold. Questions lined through have been answered and provided to the taskforce in their notebooks.

Analytics-Budget Working Group
• What impact would a smaller core have on opportunities for graduate students to teach?
• What impact would smaller class sizes have on classroom space utilization?

Oversight-Integration Working Group
• In revising the core are there issues that must be addressed with SACS and the University’s General Education Council? If so, how will coordination occur?
• What impact would changing the A&S core have on the core curriculum requirements for other academic units at Baylor? Would a smaller core curriculum entice departments to add required courses in their majors?
• What is the relationship of the A&S Core Curriculum Vision to the University’s general education requirements?
• Should all core courses have a common prefix? At present the prefix follows the department. Having a common prefix might alleviate the idea that departments have “ownership” over core courses.
• Are there courses that may not be adjusted or eliminated from the current core due to University requirements?
• Is there evidence that the large core for the BA or BS degrees (given its size as compared to peer and Texas institutions) is having a negative effect on enrollment in those degrees?

• What does the term “non-burdensome” as related to size in the A&S Core Curriculum Vision actually mean?

• How will the core be unified? Common courses for all students? Common texts within common courses? Other ways?

• Taking into account transfer courses (including dual-credit courses brought in by freshmen), what is the average number of general education credits earned at Baylor University by Baylor graduates and by graduates in the College of Arts and Sciences?

• Does the A&S Core Curriculum Vision address “second-level core” requirements?

Curriculum Development Working Group

• Have other academic units at Baylor changed their core requirements recently and, if so, what can we learn from them?

• If core requirements are required to be the same no matter what the degree, what distinguishes the BA and BS in departments that offer both degrees (e.g., BIO)?

• What kinds of structural-advising pieces must be in place to insure that seniors are not taking freshman-level core requirements?

• Could there be common core requirements (for all degrees) and then a second-level of requirements based on the type of degree (i.e., BA, BS, BFA, BSAS)?

• What does the core curriculum entail for BFA degrees from some of our peer institutions?

• What would be the impact on retention or graduation rates if the BA in BIO (or other science majors) is eliminated?

EMERGING ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED BY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

This is a list of issues emerging that are being addressed by the executive committee in subcommittees or plenary sessions. The newest issues are added to the end of the list in bold.

• Balancing required common core courses with the desire for students to have flexible exploration

• Including co-curricular requirements (e.g., service, fine arts) in the core

• Including study abroad as a core requirement

• Should a required core course also be required in a student’s major?

• What percentage of be core might reasonably be upper-level?

• To what extent can the 5 subcommittees (Scientific Method, Critical Reasoning, Civic Engagement, Creativity, and Christian Tradition) separate their work since all courses should be mutually-supportive and interconnected?

• How is the desire for electives, undergraduate research, study abroad, and secondary majors to be balanced with the desire for a substantive common core? How is the imperative for a large number of hours in the major (such as in the BFA) to be balanced with the desire for a substantive common core?

• To what extent should practical, extrinsic factors be considered in determining the size of the core curriculum? To what degree is the large core curriculum of A&S an issue in the recruiting, retention, and graduation of undergraduates in A&S?
• In what way, if any, is the size of the core curriculum related to the quality and rigor of the core curriculum? Can the core be improved and reduced in size?

• Does the A&S Core Curriculum Vision suggest a particular model for delivering the core curriculum? Are some models incompatible with the Vision?

• Will a modified distribution list model adequately support the A&S Core Curriculum Vision requirements?

• How might the modified distribution list model fail to support the A&S Core Curriculum Vision requirements?

• What courses will populate the core curriculum? How many core course sections in each department will be needed to support the new core?

• What rules will govern the distribution list area?

• How are individual departments impacted by the proposed changes to the core?

A WORD FROM PROJECT MANAGER

Colleagues,

I’d like to pay a special thanks to the 15 members of the 3 working groups and particularly those who presented reports: Paul Martens, Viola Osborn, Deanne Kramer, and Joyce Miller. Their guidance, perspective, and analysis of the options available to the executive committee is indispensable to this process.

Blake Burleson
February 3, 2017