

Core Curriculum Committee Report 3/3/99

Core Curriculum Guiding Assumptions and Recommendations

Basic Guiding Assumptions. The Core Curriculum (CC) is intended to insure that all students earning a bachelor degree at UTD are broadly educated and have demonstrated mastery of essential fundamental concepts and skills deemed to be essential for a well-rounded higher education. Because the CC is required of all students at UTD, the CC is the “property” of the University faculty as a whole and the faculty governance organization that is charged with overseeing its implementation. No part of the CC falls solely under the jurisdiction of any specific school or program.

Specification of Component Areas of CC. The CC must conform to the Texas State Coordinating Board regulations pertaining to Senate Bill 148. Within the latitude provided by Coordinating Board regulations, UTD’s CC should be consistent with the unique mission of the University. For the purpose of defining the CC, the advisory committee assumed that UTD’s unique mission is to provide exemplary education for native four-year and transfer students in all fields of study represented at UTD and to address the regional and national need for higher education in technology and science.

Rather than defining the CC in terms of list of specific courses, the advisory committee defined each component of the CC in conceptual terms. The advisory committee proposed *that a standing committee should review and approve the specific courses* that satisfy the spirit of the required components (see below). As such, the advisory committee attempted to define components in enough conceptual detail to guide decision-making processes of the standing committee.

Recommended Procedures for Review and Approval of Courses to Satisfy a CC Component Area. A duly constituted standing committee representing all academic facets of the university should be charged with determining the nature of the CC requirements and the suitability of particular courses that are designed to satisfy those requirements. *The core curriculum advisory committee strongly recommends that this standing committee have authority over core curriculum issues and that it reports directly to the Academic Senate.*

Only courses approved by this standing committee should satisfy CC requirements. Each course considered for approval should be thoroughly reviewed for approval by the standing committee. It should be the responsibility of each program to submit all materials necessary for approval review. The standing committee should approve only those courses whose objectives, practices and the qualifications of the instructors conform to the conceptual definition of the component area requirements. Approval of courses should be for a specified period of time. The effectiveness of all courses satisfying a CC component should be reviewed regularly by the standing committee. Based on this review, courses may or may not receive renewed approval.

Recommended Guidelines for Approving Courses. In keeping with Senate Bill 148, courses in the CC must demonstrate exemplary educational objectives and be executed with exemplary educational practices. The goal of each course in the CC should be to insure that students master the fundamentally essential concepts and skills of the component area. As such, the course should not be narrow, particularistic or idiosyncratic. More than one course may be specified to satisfy a specific CC component. At least one lower-division course that is listed in the Texas State Common Course Numbering System must be specified to satisfy a component requirement. Upper-division courses may also be specified. For each component area, the selection of approved courses should consider the different needs of students whose major field of study falls within and outside the component area. For example, separate options for majors and non-majors might be specified.

CHARGE

COMMITTEE ON THE CORE CURRICULUM

The Committee on the Core Curriculum is a standing, concurrent committee of the Academic Senate regarding University-wide requirements for students seeking entrance to a baccalaureate degree from The University of Texas at Dallas.

The Committee is charged to evaluate and make recommendations to the Academic Senate regarding the University-wide General Education curriculum and its implications in terms of academic requirements for undergraduate admission and graduation, including transfer admission requirements. The Committee reviews and approves the suitability of particular U.T. Dallas courses that are submitted as designed to satisfy the University's core curriculum requirements and identifies those lower division courses offered by other Texas colleges and Universities that will substitute for each U.T. Dallas core course. The Committee also monitors changes in state law and rules of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to ensure that U.T. Dallas requirements are in compliance with statewide requirements for core curriculum.

The Committee on the Core Curriculum shall act as the originator and developer of proposals regarding the core curriculum, just as the Faculty of the various Programs and Schools act regarding their majors' curricula and prerequisites. In so doing, the Committee on the Core Curriculum shall seek advice from all interested parties in the University.

By November 1, the Chair of the Committee will provide the Speaker of the Faculty with a copy of the agenda established by the Committee for its work during the academic year.

Annually, but no later than August 31, the Chair of the Committee will provide the Speaker of the Faculty with a written report for the Academic Senate of the Committee's activities for the prior academic year.

The Committee is composed of seven voting members appointed from the voting membership of the General Faculty (as defined in Title III, Chapter 21, Section I.B.1. of The University of Texas at Dallas Handbook of Operating Procedures). Committee membership will be distributed across all seven schools. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies and Director of Admissions and Registration serve as a non-voting, ex officio members. The Chair of the Committee on Educational Policy serves as ex officio member, with vote on the Core Curriculum Committee. Four non-voting members are degree-seeking undergraduates including one lower-division student and one upper-division transfer student. The Chair of the Committee serves ex officio, with vote, on the Committee on Educational Policy. The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs serves as the Responsible University Official.

Unless specified otherwise in this charge, Committee members are appointed to two-year terms, and the Chair and Vice Chair are appointed annually. The terms for appointed members shall be staggered so that no more than one-half of the terms expire in any one year. Members may be reappointed by the President for additional terms upon nomination of the Academic Council. If for any reason a Committee member resigns, the President, upon nomination of the Academic Council, shall appoint another individual to serve the remainder of the unexpired term.

Procedures for Initial Review of Courses Nominated to Satisfy Core Curriculum Requirements

Core curriculum courses hold a unique place in the university because they form the foundation of a broad education for students in all disciplines. They must serve the needs of the entire university in addition to the needs of individual programs. All members of the university have a vested interest in the curriculum, standards and instructional effectiveness of core courses. The Core Curriculum Committee acts as the gatekeeper that insures the excellence and integrity of UTD's Core Curriculum.

Core Course Approval Procedure

1. The Core Curriculum Committee will publish and distribute an announcement to all schools soliciting proposals for courses that are nominated to satisfy Core Curriculum (CC) requirements. The announcement will contain: (a) the CC Committee's conceptual specifications for each component of the CC, (b) a list of materials to be included in the proposal and (c) a deadline for submission of proposal materials. Announcement deadlines will be consistent with the catalog revision cycle.
2. The administrators of degree programs will submit to the CC Committee all requested materials by the deadline.
3. The CC Committee will distribute copies of proposal materials to all schools (via College Masters and Deans) for review. Schools shall have at least 6 working days to review such materials prior to the scheduled open hearing.
4. The CC Committee will hold open hearings to solicit advice from all interested parties in the university. Announcements of the dates, times and location of open hearing will be made at least 14 working days prior to the meetings.
5. After deliberation, the CC Committee will vote to accept, reject or recommend revise/resubmit (pending specific recommendations) each proposed course; a majority of the voting members of the committee is required to arrive of one of these three outcomes. In the case of votes favoring revise/resubmit, the committee will also vote on whether another open hearing is necessary as part of the subsequent evaluation process.

Proposal Materials

1. Course title, course prefix-number, and catalog description.
2. Name, phone and campus mail address of program contact person.
3. Specification of the component of the Core Curriculum the course is nominated to satisfy.
4. Narrative statement of the scope and purpose of the course, including an explanation of the ways that the course satisfies the conceptual objectives of the CC component.
5. The Texas Common Course Numbering System number for the course OR an explanation for why it is necessary for UTD to offer a course that is not readily transferable at the lower division.
6. A course syllabus that contains at least the following information:
 - Necessary student background or prerequisite course work.
 - Formats of instruction and estimate of proportion of each format (. e.g., 50% lecture, 25% discussion, and 25% lab).
 - Listing by dates (or by weeks into the semester) of required reading, homework, exams, paper due dates, etc.
 - Explanation of formula/method of assigning final grades.
7. Approximate number of students enrolled (average and range) in each section and how often per week sections will meet.
8. Minimum qualifications of instructors.
9. Methods used by school to evaluate the effectiveness of the course curriculum.
10. Methods used by the school to evaluate the effectiveness of instructors.
11. Mechanism of feedback about course and instructor effectiveness.