

## **Memorandum**

**To:** Murray Leaf, Speaker of the Faculty

**From:** Mary Chaffin, Chair Core Curriculum Committee

**Date:** September 29, 2006

**Re:** Core Curriculum Committee - Annual Report for 2005-2006

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On behalf of the Core Curriculum Committee, I am pleased to report its actions for the past academic year. We met eight times during the year and for the most part discussed issues related to SACs reaccreditation and the Core Curriculum.

### **Core Curriculum Courses**

Historically UTD has had many upper level courses in the Core Curriculum. This presents a problem with our SACs reaccreditation. We spent much of our meeting time discussing what to do about these courses.

- The courses are helpful for transfer students that have many lower-level courses to get upper-level credit toward the 51 required upper-level hours.
- Progression is very important to SACs – junior level courses should be pre-requisites to senior level courses, etc.
  - Courses in the core should not have pre-requisites.
  - Junior and senior level courses in the core are problematic to SACs
  - The coordinating board prefers NO upper-level core courses in these areas: rhetoric, math and science.
- Our Advanced Writing requirement is a problem.
  - Some are readings courses. There is no syllabus and no contact hours.
  - Some are variable hours.
  - In some of the advanced writing courses the writing component is essay questions on an exam.
- Upper-level history courses in the core are a problem – there is no progression. They all count for the same requirement.

- In the past exceptions to the core have been made for a student missing core components. Courses are added to the core and then not removed. Some courses ended up in the core and were never intended to be in the core.

**Actions taken to date:**

- Every course in the core curriculum must have a syllabus.
- All variable hour courses will be removed from the core as soon as substitutions can be made for these courses.
- Some upper-level courses were removed from the core. In the fall 2006 the committee will consider removing others from the core or making these courses lower-level.

**Core Curriculum Learning Goals**

The Core Curriculum Committee wrote Learning Goals (see below) for each component of the core. Core curriculum courses will be assessed against these goals. Assessment will begin this summer for core courses.

**Decisions made:**

- The committee will use sampling to assess the data from the summer courses.
- The goal for having this assessment done was September 15. (We did not meet this goal).

**Changes in the Core Curriculum for the 2005-2006 Academic Year:**

Core Area	Course	Action Taken
010	BIOL 3V91	Removed
010	BIOL 4V99	Changed to BIOL 4399
010	BIOL 4390	Added
010	CS 4380	Removed
010	BIOL 1200	Removed
030,031	GEOS 3352	Removed
030,031	ISNS 4375	Removed
040	LIT 3313	Removed
040	LIT 3314	Removed
080	PSY 4332	Removed
040	AMS 2341	Added

## **CORE OBJECTIVES FOR THE CORE CURRICULUM**

### **Communications (Chart 010)**

#### **6 hours**

The objective of the communications component of the core curriculum is to develop students' mastery in writing. This will include practice in various rhetorical modes, in grammar, mechanics, and organization, and in the use of research and logic in creating effective arguments. The student will write, receive detailed feedback about, and revise at least 15 double-spaced pages.

Component Goals:

1. Students will be able to practice and apply different approaches to and modes of written exposition as appropriate to a variety of theses and subjects.
2. Students will be able to write using effective technical requirements, including organization, mechanics, and thesis development.
3. Students will develop sensitivity to written language by being able to employ and apply effective and appropriate rhetorical devices directed at a defined audience.
4. Students will be able to demonstrate an ability to conduct research, apply source material, discuss general information, and apply logical process when writing.

### **Mathematics (Chart 020)**

#### **6 hours**

The objective of the mathematical component of the core curriculum is to develop a quantitatively literate citizen; capable of applying mathematical tools in the solution of real world problems. Familiarity with mathematical concepts and tools will enable persons to better cope with the complex financial, business, investing, and daily living problems encountered in the modern world.

Component Goals:

1. Students will be able to formulate real world problems into mathematical statements.
2. Students will be able to develop solutions to mathematical problems at the level appropriate to each course.
3. Students will be able to describe or demonstrate mathematical solutions either numerically or graphically.

### **Natural Science (Chart 030)**

#### **9 hours**

The objective of the natural science component of the core curriculum is to develop an appreciation of the intricacies of the natural world and to be able to describe and explain some of the basic principles of how the natural world functions. A more scientifically literate population will better cope with understanding and acting on issues of a scientific nature that affect their lives. Each student must complete 9 credit hours of science courses, one of which must have a laboratory component.

Component Goals:

1. Students will be able to describe basic components of the laws of nature as developed in the various scientific courses in the core program.
2. Students will be able to set up scientific problems in feasible and solvable ways as illustrated in the various subjects in the core curriculum.

3. Students will be able to make reasoned arguments about major issues of a scientific nature.

### **Humanities (Chart 040)**

#### **3 hours**

The objective of the humanities component of the core curriculum is to examine a variety of literary, philosophical, and/or historical works drawn from the humanities and presented in an established context as examples of expressions of individual and human values. Students will develop proficiency in research, critical thinking, and writing through a series of assignments in which they will demonstrate analytical processes of thought as well as intellectual responses to designated materials.

#### Component Goals:

1. Students will be able to examine a variety of works from the humanities, particularly those connected to literature and philosophy.
2. Students will be able to demonstrate their ability to analyze and compare and contrast the works with each other.
3. Students will be able to apply considered analysis and respond to works in the humanities as examples of human expression and aesthetic and philosophical principles.

### **Fine Arts (Chart 050)**

#### **3 hours**

The objective of the fine arts component of the core curriculum is to expose and illuminate at least one and possibly multiple forms of artistic expression, including but not exclusive to the traditional areas of the performing and visual arts. Through a series of discussions and examinations or reports and/or papers, students will demonstrate their critical awareness of the fine arts, a knowledge of the scope and variety of forms within specific artistic expressions, and an appreciation for the aesthetic principles that guide the creation and evaluation of art on both an individual and cultural level.

#### Component Goals:

1. Students will be able to examine and respond critically to a variety of artistic forms in at least one and possibly multiple forms of expression drawn from either the visual or performing arts or some combination thereof.
2. Students will be able to demonstrate an appreciation for artistic expression and ability to analyze specific works of art within a cultural or social context.
3. Students will be able to develop a critical approach to a given form or forms of art and will be able to articulate a response in an intelligent and informed manner.

### **American and Texas History (Chart 060)**

#### **6 hours**

The objective of the American and/or Texas history component of the core curriculum is to develop students' comprehension of the scope of American and/or Texas historical development through an examination of social, institutional, political, and cultural evolution over specified periods of time in the history of the United States and/or the State of Texas. Through discussion, a series of examinations, reports, and/or formal essays, students will be asked to differentiate and analyze historical evidence and to recognize and apply specific criteria for acceptability of historical evidence and research.

#### Component Goals:

1. Students will be able to identify, explain, and give examples of significant developments in American and/or Texas history over a defined span of time
2. Students will be able to examine and analyze historical development through knowledge of institutional, social, cultural, and political evolution and change over a defined span of time.
3. Students will be able to interpret and evaluate the acceptability of historical evidence.

## **Government (070)**

### **6 hours**

The objective is to increase students' knowledge of the history, development and evolution of political institutions, and the interrelationship between institutions such as executive and legislative; the role that political institutions play in the lives of citizens, and to demonstrate the relationship between citizens and political institutions including activities such as voting and interest group activity that provides awareness for citizen influence. This knowledge is designed to equip students to be better informed citizens capable of making important decisions in various political contexts.

#### **Component Goals:**

1. Students will be able to provide examples of and apply important theoretical and scholarly approaches to understanding state and national institutional behavior, citizen involvement and interaction between citizens and institutions of government
2. Students will be able to analyze and appreciate historical trends in development of government institutions and their constitutional foundations.
3. Students will be able to identify, describe, and analyze various mechanisms of citizen political involvement.

## **Social and Behavioral Science (Chart 080)**

### **3 hours**

The objective of the social and behavioral science component of the core curriculum is to increase students' knowledge of how social and behavioral scientists discover, describe, explain, and critically analyze the behaviors and interactions among individuals, groups, institutions, cultures, events and ideas. Such knowledge will better equip students to understand themselves and the roles they play in addressing the issues facing humanity. Each student must complete at least one course that is representative of a social and behavioral science, here defined as anthropology, criminal justice, economics, geography, psychology, sociology, or gender studies.

#### **Component Goals:**

1. Students will be able to explain and apply major theoretical and scholarly approaches, empirical findings, and historical trends in a social/behavioral science.
2. Students will be able to explain and apply basic research methods in a social/behavioral science.
3. Students will be able to identify, explain, and apply modes of critical thinking used in a social/behavioral science.