

Report to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee

Mid-year report

Year-end report

Date: 5/21/2019

Committee Name: Oversight Committee of the Core Curriculum

Chair or Co-Chairs: Thomas Miles (faculty co-chair), Wendy Watson (admin co-chair)

Meetings for the term/year:

- September 14, 2018
- October 12, 2018
- November 9, 2017
- February 8, 2019
- March 8, 2019
- April 12, 2019

Membership and Attendance (year-to-date attendance record):

Group Represented, committee office, if applicable	Name	Department or administrative unit affiliation	Term End (if applicable)	Meetings Attended	Meetings Absent (# Excused)
Chair	Thomas Miles	HNRS	FY2020	6	0
Co-chair	Wendy Watson	PSCI	N/A	5	1 (1)
Secretary	N/A				
Group I	Sophie Morton	WLL&C	FY2021	6	0
Group II	Javier Rodriguez	ENGL	FY2021	6	0
Group III	Eduardo Blanco Villar	CSCE	FY2021	5	1 (1)
Group IV	Thomas Miles	HONR	FY2020	6	0
Group V	Robert Insley	MGMT	FY2019*	4	2 (2)
Group VI	Judith Bradetich	HDFS	FY2019	5	1 (1)
Group VII	Rebecca Weber	CHEM	FY2019	3	3 (3)
Group VIII	Teresa Cooper	DANC	FY2021*	5	1 (1)
At-large 1	Lou Pelton	MKTG	FY2020*	4	2 (2)
At-large 2	Daniel Alemneh	LIBR	FY2020*	5	1 (1)
At-large 3	Ana Krahmer (Faculty Senate Representative)	LIBR	FY2020	4 (appointed in October)	2 (2)

Red: Term ending this academic year, not renewable.

* Second term

Accomplishments (including items submitted for review or approval to the Executive Committee or Faculty Senate):

The committee reviewed 14 proposals for new Core courses or changes to Core courses and approved 12 proposals. Many of these were changes to courses already in the Core, including Chemistry recitation and lab courses, to update them in terms of core objectives. There are two new proposals in Curriculum pending review and approval by members of OCCC. The faculty co-chair of OCCC (Miles) is monitoring review and will track progress over the next few weeks to ensure that the new proposals are acted upon promptly.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board accepted all proposed changes to the Core, with one exception. ADES 2700 (Design Thinking) was approved by OCCC and UCC but denied by THECB because there was not enough “foundational depth” in how expressions between cultures differ. The Director of the Core has appealed the decision, but we are not hopeful for a favorable decision from THECB.

Perhaps most importantly, the committee made progress in addressing the significant difficulties associated with communal assessment. It is often difficult to get faculty to attend the communal scoring sessions and to obtain student work artifacts for scoring. To address these challenges, the Core is working with Career Connect and the Office of the Registrar to implement the Core Pathways system of assessing student progress against the LEAP rubrics and providing a

“badging” system for students to alert them when they have reached competency in core objectives including critical thinking, quantitative literacy, writing/communication, and community and social engagement.

We believe that Core Pathways will greatly improve assessment of core competency. First, departments and instructors will be responsible for scoring student work on Canvas, ameliorating the challenges associated with getting department “buy-in” with the communal assessment process. Second, this will enable the Core to gather much more meaningful data for accreditation purposes. We will also be able to gather longitudinal data on student attainment of core competencies as they navigate their core courses, although the committee notes the difficulties in obtaining data for transfer students who take many of their core courses at other institutions. Third, these data will assist Career Connect and the Registrar in crafting the expanded transcripts which show the core competencies that may be of interest to future employers and graduate/professional schools.

OCCC membership continued our discussion of the number of courses included in the Core which may need review. Of concern, there may be courses listed in the Core that are no longer being offered and perhaps some upper-division course which should not be included in the Core. We discussed implementing a rolling review of courses, with recommendations to be forwarded to the Office of the Provost.

Ongoing/future projects:

At the final meeting of the committee, the members were notified that the Director of the Core would, starting in the 2019-2020 academic year, be a full-time faculty position. The position has been listed and interviews will be conducted by the Office of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs over the summer. We currently have two first-term members (Bradetich and Weber) whose terms are ending but who are eligible for reappointment. One member (Insley) is term-limited and will need to be replaced in the coming year.

Some issues related to Core Pathways were tabled for discussion in the coming academic year as we await the appointment of a new Director of the Core. There is some question over the threshold to trigger “badging,” or determining when a student has met a core competency. The rubrics are scaled differently, with some being 16-point scaled and others 20. The committee recommends that we set a percentage threshold, perhaps 75%, to trigger badging. The committee also had lingering questions over how the data would translate for accreditation purposes with SACS and THECB.

As mentioned above, the committee will discuss implementing a three-year rolling review of existing core courses. Our aim is to identify courses that are listed which are no longer being offered, as well as courses which may not belong in the Core. We also seek to identify courses whose signature assignments need to be updated to conform to core objectives. The results of this review would then be submitted to the VPAA.

The committee continues to monitor any potential changes to workload in the next academic year. We anticipate that the university’s involvement in “Dual Credit”, and new degree programs offered through The New College in Frisco may increase the scope of our mandate. This

development was first recognized in the 2017-2018 academic year and we continue to look for any changes.