

Vitalization of General Education at Oregon State University

Final report of the Baccalaureate Core Ad Hoc Review Committee presented to the Faculty Senate of Oregon State University on May 13, 2010

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Background and Introduction

This journey begins in May 2002 during the early stages of the “OSU 2007” strategic planning process , when the 2001-2002 Baccalaureate Core Committee of the Faculty Senate issued a four-page summary report¹ on the history and relevance of the Baccalaureate Core program, noting program goals and structure that were in place at the program’s inception in 1988, as well as subsequent incremental developments. The report highlighted the committee’s “unequivocal affirmation that the Baccalaureate Core is and should remain the indispensable core of the OSU undergraduate educational program.” (The emphasis is from the original report.)

Today, after eighteen months of outreach, interaction, and listening within the OSU community, the Baccalaureate Core *Ad Hoc* Review Committee has found, among other things, that our commitment to OSU’s general education effort via the Baccalaureate Core remains steadfast and vital throughout the community. In addition, since 2002 a nation-wide commitment to general education has emerged that visibly and forcefully extends across the higher education landscape. This national focus on general

¹ Review/Relevance of the Baccalaureate Core, <http://oregonstate.edu/senate/committees/bcc/reports/relevance2002.html>, accessed May 5, 2010.

education is being led by the Association of American Colleges & Universities (of which OSU is a member) and rallies around their Essential Learning Outcomes² of liberal education. This commitment is shared (and enforced) by accrediting agencies, including the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, to which OSU is applying for institutional re-accreditation in the 2010-2011 academic year.

Within the goals and vision of OSU 2007, the May 2002 report articulated the role of the Baccalaureate Core in a way that encompassed institutional mission, educational mission, and the individual experience of OSU undergraduates.

“Turning this vision statement and these goals into reality for OSU undergraduates means providing compelling core learning experiences across the major disciplines (the humanities and arts, the physical and biological sciences, and the social sciences) that form the scientific and societal bedrock upon which the five thematic areas of the Vision Statement ultimately rest. Ultimately, the core learning experiences of every student must include the strengthening of critical thinking and communication skills (including effective writing, speaking, and quantitative skills). It is exactly the function of a baccalaureate core program to be sure that the foregoing broad educational experiences are provided to each student in an intentional way and not left to chance.”

Today, noting that the Baccalaureate Core touches every OSU undergraduate and a large proportion of the faculty, our first step in this process is to affirm this vision of the Baccalaureate Core as a vital centerpiece to OSU’s efforts to promote retention and student success through graduation and beyond.

Undergraduate Education in the OSU Strategic Plan

The 2001-2002 Baccalaureate Core Committee offered its 2002 report³ within the context of the OSU 2007 planning process. This report draws attention to the relative importance of undergraduate education in the OSU Strategic Plan, first published in 2004 and now in Phase II of its implementation. Goals 1 and 3 (out of three) focus largely on research, infrastructure, and financial resources, while Goal 2 calls for enhancement of the teaching and learning environment, so it is here that we look for principal institutional approaches to enhancing the experience and outcomes of undergraduate education at OSU. The following strategies were implemented during Phase I (2004-2009):

- Establishment of the Academic Success Center and the Center for Teaching & Learning,
- Ensuring access to Baccalaureate Core courses, and
- Development of an assessment framework encompassing all educational programs.

These were/are all important steps involving varying levels of institutional investment, follow-through, and impact, but they are only indirectly supportive of and accessory to the undergraduate educational enterprise. There has been a notable lack of commitment to provide direct support at the curricular and faculty level in the form of professorial hiring, rewards and incentives for leadership and excellence in teaching, control of class sizes, or other means. We welcome a proposed infusion of new professorial positions within this and the next biennium, but we can only hope that the needs of our undergraduate educational programs, including the Baccalaureate Core, will remain essential criteria for the hiring of these new colleagues.

² Essential Learning Outcomes of Liberal Education, http://www.aacu.org/leap/documents/EssentialOutcomes_Chart.pdf, accessed May 6, 2010.

³ *Op. cit.* Accessed May 5, 2010.

Phase II of the OSU Strategic Plan (2009-2013) contains these additional strategies for enhancing undergraduate education:⁴

- “Implement a student engagement agenda that enables successful transition to college, adds value to student experiences, and increases leadership and research opportunities in order to raise first-year retention and six-year graduation rates.
- “Ensure all teaching faculty contribute to a learner-centered academic experience, and aid them in bringing their scholarship into the learning experience of students.
- “Re-evaluate the liberal education component (“baccalaureate core”) of the undergraduate education to ensure that all students explore, experience, and reflect upon world views, life situations, and cultures that are different from their own, and create opportunities for students to apply their skills and knowledge to complex problems and real-world challenges.”

The University Committee for Student Engagement & Experience (UCSEE) leads the student engagement agenda, with specific initiatives and funding devoted primarily to the first-year curriculum (e.g. U-Engage and departmental orientation courses) and student support (e.g. academic Early Alert System and promotion of undergraduate research). New institutional investments to help faculty shape learning in the academic realm are not readily identifiable to date. The Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate had already constituted and charged the current *Ad Hoc* review committee by the end of 2008. No new resources have been earmarked to implement the recommendations of this committee.

The muted and indirect treatment of undergraduate education in the OSU Strategic Plan signals that the *quality* of the undergraduate educational experience has not yet been raised to the level of an institutional priority that drives fundraising, marketing, or institutional identity. This is in stark contrast to the relentless championing of research revenues, philanthropic successes of the capital campaign, and burgeoning enrollments as solutions to budget shortfalls. As public investment in higher education continues to sag, the institution increasingly focuses on revenue sources and short-term economic impact rather than celebrating the longer-term value that derives from tangible expenditures that underwrite quality undergraduate education. It is therefore no surprise that “student retention rates and graduation rates remain short of expectations.”⁵

The Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate charged the Baccalaureate Core *Ad Hoc* Review Committee to propose revisions to the Baccalaureate Core in order to improve the educational attainment and retention of undergraduate students at Oregon State University. By supporting the initiatives in this report, faculty colleagues can help the Faculty Senate take the lead on meaningful institutional efforts to enhance general and undergraduate education.

⁴ OSU Strategic Plan, Phase II, <http://oregonstate.edu/leadership/strategic-plan>, accessed May 6, 2010.

⁵ OSU Strategic Plan, Phase II, Executive Summary, <http://oregonstate.edu/leadership/strategic-plan>, accessed May 6, 2010.

What the *Ad Hoc* Committee Has Heard From You

The recently completed review, and this report, has been a long time coming. Such a review was anticipated in the aforementioned 2002 Baccalaureate Core Committee report and in many other contexts before and since. It took much of the calendar year 2008 to constitute and charge this *Ad Hoc* committee, which published results of a campus fact-finding process in June 2009⁶ and a Preliminary Proposal for Revisions to the Baccalaureate Core in February 2010.⁷

The February 2010 draft proposal consisted of five elements relating to:

1. Adoption of Comprehensive Learning Goals for Graduates;
2. Changing the campus culture relative to the Core through communication of a shared vision of general education, expanded faculty development opportunities, and initiation of an assessment-driven cycle of continuous improvement of the Baccalaureate Core;
3. Commitment to course access in the Skills component of the Core (Writing, Math, Oral Communication, Fitness) and expanded piloting of learning communities;
4. Incorporation of experiential learning into the Baccalaureate Core; and
5. Establishment of a shared governance model for combining administrative leadership with increased faculty involvement in support of an expanded oversight role for the Baccalaureate Core Committee of the Faculty Senate.

From February-April 2010, the committee invested hundreds of hours listening to campus feedback on the draft proposal. In contrast to a notable level of campus-wide consensus regarding what general education *should* be at OSU (as reported in June 2009), there is a full spectrum of opinion and sentiment about what we should do (or not do) to enhance the Baccalaureate Core. We have met with dozens of campus groups and councils composed of professors, administrators, professional faculty, and students. Many have contributed individual written comments through an anonymous feedback site on the Faculty Senate website. We hosted community forums until people stopped coming. Subsequent targeted invitations revealed latent pockets of as yet unarticulated commentary and we anticipate that other such pockets persist despite our sincere efforts to root them out. The committee wishes to thank those who took the time to talk with us or share written commentary, all within an atmosphere of shared purpose that was predominantly collegial. That process alone has opened new discussions that promise to enhance the Baccalaureate Core experience for our students.

The feedback that we received can be aggregated into three broad areas of concern: Costs, Rigor and Engagement, and Trust and Process. Numerical codes refer to the draft proposal elements 1-5 above:

Costs

- Almost universally, folks are concerned about the funding for FTE associated with administration of the Core; “no new money” is hard to believe. (5)
- Will there really be funding for faculty development and mentoring? (5)

⁶ Phase I Summary Report, <http://oregonstate.edu/senate/committees/other/bcr/reports/index.html>, accessed May 9, 2010.

⁷ Phase II Draft Proposal, <http://oregonstate.edu/senate/committees/other/bcr/reports/index.html>, accessed May 9, 2010.

- Experiential learning: proper set-up and assessment is very expensive, and depends on professional expertise. (4)
- What will be the structure of Core-related positions in Academic Affairs? (5)
- Reporting burdens for assessment must be kept to minimum (dept chairs) (2,5)
- The Department Heads, among others, are wondering how classes will be funded – what will be the incentives to offer the BC courses to which we are committing (particularly the Skills courses) (3,5)
- Up to now, we have the best Core that can be had for free.

Rigor and Engagement

- The proposal needs an engaging centerpiece to inspire and engage the faculty. (2)
- The Center for Teaching and Learning is a valuable resource as it is and must be retained. (5)
- Faculty development opportunities in WIC and DPD are exemplary and should be expanded to the entire Core so as to be universally applicable in ways that step outside disciplines. (2)
- Faculty development will need to encompass the needs of fixed-term instructors and GTAs. (2)
- The students felt strongly that any new system needs to result in better engagement/interaction with faculty rather than “dumbing down.” How to stimulate faculty enthusiasm? (2)
- Make sure we understand and track/assess over time what employers really want. (2,5)
- Fitness needs to be expanded to “health and wellness” with a larger range of offerings. Or, variously, the Fitness requirement should be eliminated. (3)
- Reviews of placement and program effectiveness in writing and math must incorporate faculty expertise from the disciplines. (3)
- “Foundational Skills” sounds remedial. Clarify that the focus is on establishment of university-level competencies and expectations and be sure that Advanced Placement students are not held back. (3)
- Staffing of Skills courses should not be the province of GTAs and fixed term instructors. (2)
- We should restrict or eliminate the use of S/U in the Core. (2)
- Many times: How do these changes help students develop an integrated view of the Core (outcomes)? (3)
- Professional faculty members have roles to play in experiential learning. Professorial faculty must touch all experiential learning opportunities that satisfy Core requirements. (3,4)
- Clarify how development of the EL designator should proceed. (3,5) Student voice: Can EL activities “back-count?” (4)
- Core courses should not be tailored to the needs of departmental majors; double-dipping (where courses meet Core and major requirements) should be forbidden vs. double-dipping is desirable and should be encouraged. (5)
- Should Synthesis courses have prerequisites? Should there be lower division Synthesis options? (2)
- Faculty must understand the role of their course(s) in gen ed. (2)
- What do we do about online courses - quality?

Trust and Process:

- Why would the faculty turn over (curricular) ownership to an administrator in Academic Affairs? We need more professors, not more administrators. (5)
- What are the measurable outcomes of the Core? How far apart are the BC outcomes and the LGGs? What can be the timeline and process for aligning/mapping Core outcomes with LGGs? Whose job is it to do this? How can we operationalize the LGGs? (1,5)
- What is the shared vision? How does the proposal support the Strategic Plan? (2)
- (Head) advisors may be able to help with developing cross-course/category connections. (2)
- Fixed-term faculty must have access to development opportunities. (2)
- What will the new course and category review processes look like in the Baccalaureate Core Committee and Curriculum Council? How can we make the current processes less cumbersome and more meaningful? (2,5)
- How do first-year learning communities engage students who live off-campus? Can we articulate a role for peer mentoring? (3)
- What are the implications/provisions for transfer students? (esp. fitness) For non-traditional students? (5)

- What sort of grandfathering will be needed? (5)
- Early-career students and those switching majors need help getting access to courses in priority registration. (5)
- Major changes will need to be incremental rather than disruptive.
- Should we have a “college” of the Baccalaureate Core? Should the Core and its administration reside with the Division of Arts and Sciences? (5)

There were more than a few comments lamenting that our proposal has not gone far enough in proposing actual changes to the Bacc Core, including structural changes to specific Core requirements and even individual courses. For example, many contend that current categories are unduly redundant and that there are too many courses overall in the Core. Noting that not all agree with these contentions or what is to be done about them, the *Ad Hoc* committee acknowledges these concerns; we include them later in this report in a prioritized to-do list of Future Initiatives that we feel deserve immediate or near-term consideration by the Faculty Senate and/or OSU administration. Still, we have concluded that the key to meaningful and sustained improvements to the Core lies deeper than this and has more to do with how the Core is envisioned and positioned with the institution rather than with its structural detail. We are in complete agreement with the May 2002 Baccalaureate Core Committee report.⁸

“The BCC finds nothing in the recent OSU 2001 Accreditation Self-Study, in the University Accreditation Report, or in the OSU 2007 planning discussions that would indicate a fundamental weakness in the concepts underlying the Baccalaureate Core.”

This is not to say that the Core is perfect. There are fundamental questions that need to be addressed *on an ongoing basis*. The aforementioned 2002 report detailed six issues of the day, and we quote them in their entirety.⁹

1. “The faculty development opportunities under WIC and DPD have proven very effective in developing baccalaureate core courses in those areas. These programs could serve as models for other core areas, helping faculty develop and articulate the Bac Core aspects of their courses. In particular, faculty development programs in strategies and effective means for promoting “critical thinking”, a criterion of every Bac Core course, may be very beneficial.
2. “Some students and faculty question the need to have a Skills Fitness Requirement under the Bac Core.
3. “Under current guidelines, each Science Perspectives course must have a lab component. Students must take three such courses. It has been suggested that the goals of this Bac Core requirement could be met without every course having a lab component and/or that the interpretation of a “lab component” could be broadened from the traditional bench-lab model.
4. “Under current guidelines, synthesis courses are required to be upper division. This stipulation is made primarily to ensure that students will need to synthesize ideas at a higher level than may be possible with only lower division training and maturity. Nevertheless, it may be that the goals of a synthesis course could be achieved at the lower division level. If so, this would provide a wonderful opportunity for lower division students to examine the relationships between disciplines at a time that might be very beneficial to them in terms of making career choices.
5. “A number of faculty have expressed a desire to have some sort of “teamwork” or “collaborative problem-solving” requirement in the Bac Core. Would this be a requirement for all, some, or none of the core areas?
6. “The OSU Accreditation Team identified a need for assessing the effectiveness of the Bac Core in the delivery of individual learning outcomes related to category criteria.”

⁸ [Op. cit.](#) Accessed May 5, 2010.

⁹ [Op. cit.](#) Accessed May 5, 2010.

These were issues of longstanding in 2002 and yet there has been little or no movement to resolve these issues or take advantage of these ideas in the intervening eight years. The *Ad Hoc* review committee concludes that the immediate imperative for long-term and meaningful improvement to the Core is not to make specific changes to it, but to *vitalize* it --- to empower the faculty to guide development of the Core on an ongoing basis and over the long term. The over-arching strategy of our proposal is to affirm the context, position, and purpose of general education and the Core within the university curriculum and community. Our aim is to raise the profile of the Core and of undergraduate education within OSU's institutional identity. We hope to stimulate enhanced faculty engagement and student appreciation for the Core. Our intention is to develop an infrastructure that will provide rational criteria and evidence for resolving contentious structural questions such as the Fitness and Lab requirements. We are proposing a vitalized model of shared governance that provides the faculty with access to administrative advocacy and logistic support for sustaining the evolution of the Core according to the will of the faculty. Despite what some have characterized as a "30,000-foot" perspective of this report, our proposals immediately address items 1 and 6 from the 2002 issues list.

Proposal Overview

This proposal contains a mix of broad vision and specific ideas. It is impossible to implement every great idea and correct every identified problem in one *ad hoc* revision. We therefore hope to provide a strong framework and vision for effective general education at OSU that will help to guide the evolution of the Baccalaureate Core over the coming years. Fundamentally, we think our ideas will promote student success and retention, consistent with OSU's Strategic Plan, in the near- as well as the long term.

First and foremost we need to create a clear, unified vision of general education, for OSU undergraduates and faculty, and resolve how it integrates with various Major degree programs on campus. This effort is rooted in agreement upon broad Learning Goals for Graduates (LGGs), and mapping curricular requirements to these LGGs to discern the relative responsibilities of the Baccalaureate Core vs. majors. We need to establish these goals clearly in our OSU Strategic Plan. Concurrently, we need to better articulate and visually represent these goals for our students and alumni, and demonstrate the horizontal and vertical integration of student learning during their time with us at OSU. The communication effort should engage our offices of Advancement, Admissions/Enrollment Management, and the OSU Foundation in efforts that span from recruiting to graduation transcripts to alumni relations and development, so that the particulars of the undergraduate experience are ingrained in OSU's institutional identity. This aspiration is consistent with and can profitably build upon a notable institutional loyalty that characterizes OSU alumni.

We need to create a framework for sustaining and improving the Baccalaureate Core over time, promoting regular engagement by a critical mass of our faculty - a central theme in this proposal. We need Faculty Senate committees that routinely assess the program and make changes over time such that there is continuous communication of our shared vision (e.g., the Learning Goals) across the campus. In this way, catalog-visible narratives/figures and a modern web presence is maintained for our students, staff and faculty. We need university-level support for coordinated faculty/advisor development and incentives for new curriculum development directly related to the Baccalaureate Core. As we reorganize university finances, the Core can be elevated to an organizing theme since it impacts every student in our system.

To sustain and support the program appropriately we will need to establish multiple direct and indirect assessment strategies with identified feedback loops to the Faculty Senate and departments. Indeed, it will require shared governance in its truest sense. To reinforce the curricular authority of the Faculty Senate, we propose to re-name the Baccalaureate Core Committee of the Faculty Senate as the Baccalaureate Core Leadership Team and to expand its charge to encompass purview over Learning Goals, structural and implementation issues, and curricular strategies involving the Core in general. It will also require a dedicated and newly constituted Baccalaureate Core Implementation Team within Academic Affairs, led by a permanent Baccalaureate Core Director as a partner with the Faculty Senate who is supported by OSU faculty members occupying fixed-term partial FTE appointments according to project-based needs (e.g., math placement, writing, and phase-in of experiential learning).

In developing this proposal, we considered the following design questions:

1. How can we best energize a ‘community of learning’ that values general education?
2. How can we more effectively develop and maintain a progression into and through the Baccalaureate Core for our students? What is the role of the first-year experience in this process?
3. How can we establish more meaningful connections and balance between the Core and majors?
4. How can we foster connections among diverse fields of thought in order to make the Baccalaureate Core more rich and meaningful, more welcome among students, and easier for faculty and advisors to convey and implement?
5. How can we create opportunities for integrative learning within classes (e.g., via team teaching and/or multi-disciplinary instruction)? Faculty members do their best thinking and best teaching while in meaningful relationship with students and colleagues.
6. Who will do the teaching and how will those teachers be prepared and supported for delivering the Baccalaureate Core? How will that vary between lower- and upper-division requirements? How will faculty be rewarded for such teaching? What will be the role of eCampus?
7. What are the logistics for implementing and monitoring experiential learning (e.g., service learning, undergraduate research and study abroad)?

The intent is to catalyze a transformation of the Baccalaureate Core through a dynamic and responsive system (much like a living organism) that is robust and sustainable. As opposed to immediate structural changes, a philosophy of continuous improvement through development, implementation, assessment and evaluation is envisioned, as shown in Figure 1.

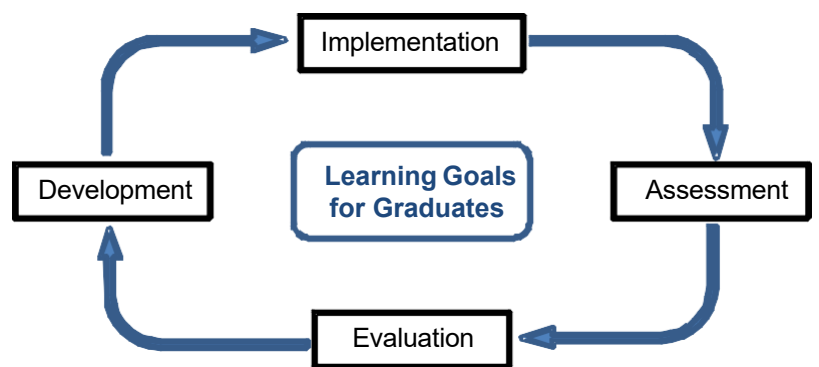


Figure 1. Cycle of Continuous Improvement

In response to community feedback to the preliminary proposal circulated in February 2010, we have reorganized and refined our final report to highlight four principal initiatives for immediate adoption by the Faculty Senate. Each initiative contains implications for further action by the Baccalaureate Core Committee and the Curriculum Council, and all proposed changes must be approved through existing decision-making processes of the Senate. Adoption of these initiatives therefore has multiple

implications for the long and short-term charges of the Baccalaureate Core Committee and the Curriculum Council.

Comprehensive Learning Goals: The university years are transformational in the lives of our students. Building on work that had its origins in the OSU 2007 planning process, the proposed Learning Goals for Graduates (LGGs) encompass all components of the undergraduate experience, including the major and the Baccalaureate Core, as well as co-curricular, residential, and social experiences. These goals are meant to circumscribe OSU's aspirational contributions to the lives of our graduates.

Implementation of a Shared Vision: A vision of the Baccalaureate Core has been in place since 1988 and has been repeatedly reaffirmed, most recently by the Baccalaureate Core Committee in 2007 and by the June 2009 report of the *Ad Hoc* review committee. The *Ad Hoc* review committee proposes that a key step in making this vision a reality will be to support ongoing realignment within Academic Affairs¹⁰ that will focus the highly esteemed faculty development activities now offered through WIC, DPD, and the Center for Teaching and Learning on the Bacc Core. Coupled with newly identified funds to support assessment of the Core, key mechanisms are moving into place to transform the campus culture surrounding general education.

We additionally offer two specific curricular initiatives designed to immediately enhance the effectiveness of the Baccalaureate Core:

Core First-Year Experience: Here we align with the ongoing Student Success Initiative that is now focused on the first-year experience due to its critical position as a nexus of retention.

- College-Level Skills Requirement: Reading/Writing, Mathematics, and Oral Communication to be completed within the first year completed; WR II to be completed in the second year;
- Administrative commitment to course access and appropriate class sizes;
- First-year Learning Community pilot programs.

This initiative incorporates a slight shift from our draft proposal in February 2010, which would have further stipulated that the Fitness requirement be satisfied in the first year. Tightly prescribed entry-level program requirements in some major programs led to questions about the wisdom of requiring that all Skills requirements be satisfied in the first year. At the same time, the committee acknowledges widespread sentiment that, while Fitness incorporates important lifelong implications on the personal and social levels, Writing, Mathematics, and Oral Communication are of immediate urgency in setting the stage for academic success for our students.

Experiential Learning: Using diverse means to achieve learning goals and essential outcomes

- Allow approved service/hands-on/international experiences to satisfy Bacc Core requirements
 - Existing and new courses and opportunities, with appropriate oversight and assessment
- New "EL" prefix/suffix options

Finally, the *Ad Hoc* committee has compiled a list of Future Issues that will likely be at the forefront of deliberations by the Baccalaureate Core Leadership and Implementation Teams in the coming years. These issues will be impacted by the vision and framework established now by the Faculty Senate, according to a vote on this proposal, and also by ongoing campus realignment and budgetary changes.

¹⁰ March 15, 2010 Strategic Realignment Proposal, Academic Affairs, <http://oregonstate.edu/leadership/sites/default/files/budget-documents/mar15-aa.pdf>, accessed May 11, 2010.

Initiative for Adoption: Learning Goals for Graduates (LGGs)

Learning outcomes for students' majors and their general education historically have been separated. We suggest that this tends to result in a conceptual disconnection between the major and the Baccalaureate Core, thereby weakening both curricular experiences for students. By integrating both curricular systems through a common set of outcomes, we anticipate that faculty and students will more readily embrace interdisciplinary projects and thinking and that the systems will provide conceptual support for each other in a more reciprocal relationship.

Educational theorists and researchers have long understood the quintessential importance of learning goals in the shaping of curriculum and teaching.¹¹ The primacy of learning goals is germane to all learning organizations, from the elementary school to higher education and the world of work. The learning goals proposal that follows reflects our commitment to an undergraduate learning experience and culture that is both of social worth as well as worthy of a great institution of higher learning.

The following outcomes have been adapted from the "Learning Goals for Graduates" (LGGs) that had their origins within the OSU 2007 Learning Goals Task Force and were refined in 2006 by the University Assessment Council. The group that developed these goals during fall 2005, the Learning Goals Task Force, was a subgroup of the University Assessment Council. Task force members included the following: Leslie Burns (facilitator), Susie Leslie, Bob Mason, Mina McDaniel, Ron Reuter, Larry Roper, Rebecca Sanderson, Gina Shellhammer, Janine Trempy, Juan Trujillo, and Vickie Nunnemaker (staff). This group developed seven core learning goals at its fall 2005 retreat, but this taxonomy of outcomes has not yet been institutionalized or operationalized. Adoption and implementation of learning goals at this level is a precursor to the development of measurable learning outcomes and rubrics for assessment of student learning in the Core.

Revised accreditation standards of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities require institutions to identify "*core themes within institutional mission.*" Goal 2 in the OSU Strategic Plan envisions that we will: "Provide an excellent teaching and learning environment and achieve student access, persistence and success through graduation". The Learning Goals, if approved by the Faculty Senate, articulate a viable core theme in support of this goal.

The proposal:

The Baccalaureate Core Ad Hoc Review Committee recommends that that the Faculty Senate adopt the following Learning Goals for Graduates (LGGs) who receive a Bachelors degree from Oregon State University. These learning goals should be interpreted as part of a living document, subject to periodic review and update by the Curriculum Council. Consideration of proposed changes to the Learning Goals should be regular part of work of the Council.

These proposed goals are a slight modification of the 2005 Learning Goals for Graduates. We have inserted modifications to enhance active components of the goals as a precursor to the development of measurable learning outcomes that map to these goals. Additional changes to the Learning Goals come

¹¹ Eisner, E. 1985. *The educational imagination: On the design and evaluation of school programs*. New York: MacMillan.

as a result of input from students (who have proposed the addition of a Sustainability category for the Core) and from the International Council (to promote the inclusion of global competence as a vital learning goal for graduates.

Learning Goals for Graduates (LGGs) of Oregon State University

1. Competency and Knowledge in Multiple Fields - As an OSU graduate, you will show a depth of knowledge in one or more majors as it relates to its history, problems, strategic thinking processes and ways of knowing, and vocabulary. You will also show a breadth of knowledge across the disciplines, which include the humanities and arts, science, social science and mathematics, from both technical and critical orientations.
2. Critical Thinking - As an OSU graduate, you will evaluate and synthesize information from multiple sources and perspectives to make informed decisions and solve problems; you will exhibit intellectual curiosity, including the disposition and ability to engage in evidence-based reasoning and critical thinking.
3. Pluralism and Cultural Legacies - As an OSU graduate, you will acquire knowledge and appreciation of the diversity of human cultural, historical and social experiences, and be able to reflect on how your individual life experience relates to the complex nature of human conditions in other places and times.
4. Collaboration - As an OSU graduate, you will develop the ability to be a positive contributor to situations requiring shared responsibility toward achieving a common goal.
5. Social Responsibility and Sustainability - As an OSU graduate, you will develop the capacity to construct an engaged, contributing life, and to engage in actions that reflect an understanding of the values of service, citizenship, social responsibility and demonstrate global competence by understanding the interdependent nature of local and global communities.
6. Communication - As an OSU graduate, you will be able to present and evaluate information, as well as to devise and exchange ideas clearly and effectively so that you can communicate with diverse audiences in a variety of situations.
7. Self-Awareness and Life-Long Learning - As an OSU graduate, you will develop awareness of and appreciation for your personal strengths, values, and challenges, and you will cultivate the ability to use that knowledge to guide your future learning and development.

Implications:

1. The *Ad Hoc* Baccalaureate Core Review Committee recommends that the Faculty Senate adopt these goals as an overarching framework for ongoing curriculum development and assessment of student learning. It is intended that these LGGs will play an integral role in shaping curriculum development and university-wide assessments. We recommend that the Curriculum Council take on at least two new roles, two of which are enumerated below; the third is addressed under Implication #3.
 - *The Curriculum Council shall undertake periodic review of the LGGs, propose changes as necessary, and seek regular re-affirmation of the LGGs from the Faculty Senate every other year.*
 - *In concert with the Office of Academic Affairs and the Baccalaureate Core Implementation Team, the Curriculum Council shall incorporate assessment of programmatic alignment with the LGGs in periodic review of undergraduate programs.*

2. Each major program will explicitly identify and demonstrate the manner in which the discipline-specific curriculum allows its students to achieve the LGGs. The Baccalaureate Core, as a whole, will include all LGGs. Each category description will identify those specific LGGs that it addresses. Any course approved for a category will need to identify in a specified way how students achieve those category specific LGGs. How LGGs are addressed and contained in other (non Baccalaureate Core) course syllabi will be decided by faculty at the program level.
3. The LGGs will reflect both the formal and informal educational experience of all undergraduates. Implications #1 and #2 address the formal curriculum. The informal curriculum consists of co-curricular activities, such as those sponsored by housing and residence halls, clubs, athletic programs and ad hoc service opportunities. University personnel and advisors whose work is in this informal educational system will support student's accomplishment of the LGGs. The Curriculum Council will work with the Office of Academic Affairs and the Student Affairs Team to coordinate this work.

Initiative for Adoption: Implementation and Shared Vision

The 2006-2007 Baccalaureate Core Committee adopted the following vision statement for the Baccalaureate Core for the OSU General Catalog.¹²

“The Baccalaureate Core Curriculum is intended to represent what the OSU faculty believes is the foundation for students' further understanding of the modern world. Informed by natural and social sciences, arts, and humanities, the Baccalaureate Core requires students to think critically and creatively, and to synthesize ideas and information when evaluating major societal issues. Importantly, the Baccalaureate Core promotes understanding of interrelationships among disciplines in order to increase students' capacities as ethical citizens of an ever-changing world.”

The essence of this vision dates from the inception of the Core in 1988 and harkens to the articulation from the May 2002 submission that was cited at the beginning of this report. The foregoing statement represents our shared vision of the Bacc Core and the role of general education at OSU until such time as the faculty sees fit to change it through declarative action by the Faculty Senate. Despite overall positive consensus on the basic philosophy and structure of the Core, the June 2009 report of the *Ad Hoc* review committee confirmed a widely-held sense that in practice many perceive the Bacc Core as a discrete set of unrelated classes presented as random choices on a checklist. Students have expressed concern about faculty engagement with the Core and vice versa. Perceptions about academic rigor in the Core have suffered as a consequence.

The Bacc Core is a large enterprise with hundreds of courses from many contributing departments operating under widely varying sets of priorities. Budgets and funding models have sometimes created incentives counterproductive to the Core. Departments set the terms of participation, particularly in staffing. The volunteer Baccalaureate Core Committee of the Faculty Senate oversees the Core, continually reviewing courses by categories and new submissions. The Committee is called upon to address the multi-faceted general education needs of thousands of students, but the Committee possesses no resources to stimulate larger program development or assess outcomes of courses, categories, or the overall program.

Realization of a shared vision depends on faculty and curriculum development as well as meaningful assessment at a program level. To empower Faculty Senate leadership of the Core and to bring OSU into line with institutions that are most actively engaged with enhancing the quality of general education, we are proposing changes to Baccalaureate Core Committee review practices – broadening their charge and renaming them the “Baccalaureate Core Leadership Team” to emphasize its role in establishing the institutional character and position of the Core (e.g., relative to the LGGs). Such an expansion of purview is only feasible if the Leadership Team has help. Therefore, despite hesitations voiced about a perceived expansion of administration, we remain convinced of the essential need to establish a parallel “Baccalaureate Core Implementation Team” within Academic Affairs and charged to provide support to the Baccalaureate Core Leadership Team (aka the Baccalaureate Core Committee of the Faculty Senate).

¹² Description of the Baccalaureate Core, adopted by the Baccalaureate Core Committee. February 14, 2007, <http://catalog.oregonstate.edu/bcc.aspx>, accessed May 11, 2010.

The Baccalaureate Core Implementation Team will be responsible for delivering faculty development opportunities that focus on the Core (including targeted opportunities for advisors, associated faculty, and instructors working in the Core). This draws on a planned realignment in Academic Affairs that will merge WIC, DPD, and the Center for Teaching & Learning. This will lead to wider distribution of the highly regarded faculty development programs in WIC and DPD, which have already demonstrated the benefits that adhere to administrative investment in the Core. This will also enable the Center for Teaching and Learning to continue its support for teaching excellence across the university while focusing on the Core as a priority. The realignment in Academic Affairs described here is already underway, pending the outcome of this review.¹³

We can compare this proposal for shared governance with that at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, whose faculty recently adopted a renewed comprehensive general education curriculum and infrastructure dubbed ACE, for Achievement-Centered Education. Along with a refined general education curriculum, the adoption of ACE included specific provisions for shared governance. Here is how UNL partitions responsibility and prerogative between the faculty-driven University Curriculum Committee (UCC) and the administrative Office of Undergraduate Studies.

The Role of Undergraduate Studies (University of Nebraska-Lincoln, adopted 2008)¹⁴

The Dean of Undergraduate Studies and the Office of Undergraduate Studies will be responsible for supporting the work of the Initial ACE Committee and the UCC ACE subcommittee. (This office currently supports the work of UCC and the University-wide Assessment Committee.) Such support may include:

- *funding for ACE program development and assessment.*
- *hosting an ACE website where current information about program requirements, ACE-certified courses, the assessment process and institutional-level program assessment results, and ACE forms are readily available.*
- *keeping ACE sections of the Undergraduate Bulletin and ACE websites current.*
- *facilitative infrastructure and clerical support.*
- *fielding, addressing, and communicating concerns about the ACE program.*
- *working with deans, chairs/heads, Academic Affairs, the Institute for Agriculture and Natural Resources, and Admissions to see that ACE serves our students well.*

Thus the administrative role is to provide faculty development, assessment, communication, and liaison to units participating in general education programming. Further resources will need to be allocated to OSU's Office of Academic Affairs to support assessment. This will enable the Baccalaureate Core Leadership Team (remember, curricular leadership resides in the Faculty Senate) to incorporate evidence of student learning into its review of courses, categories, and the overall Baccalaureate Core program. This arrangement extends the purview of the Faculty Senate in shaping the Baccalaureate Core experience for our students.

¹³Academic Affairs Proposal to the Strategic Alignment and Budget Reduction Review, March 15, 2010, <http://oregonstate.edu/leadership/sites/default/files/budget-documents/mar15-aa.pdf>, accessed May 11, 2010.

¹⁴About ACE, Governance and Assessment, http://www.unl.edu/ous/ace/PDFs/ace4_GovAssess.pdf, accessed May 6, 2010.

The proposal:

The shared governance model includes a revised role of the BCC (newly BCLT) and the establishment of the Baccalaureate Core Implementation Team (BCIT). It is designed to provide a solid structural foundation to realize the other elements described in this proposal by assigning individual responsibility for effectiveness of the Baccalaureate Core. Figure 2 identifies specific primary responsibilities in the cycle of continuous improvement.

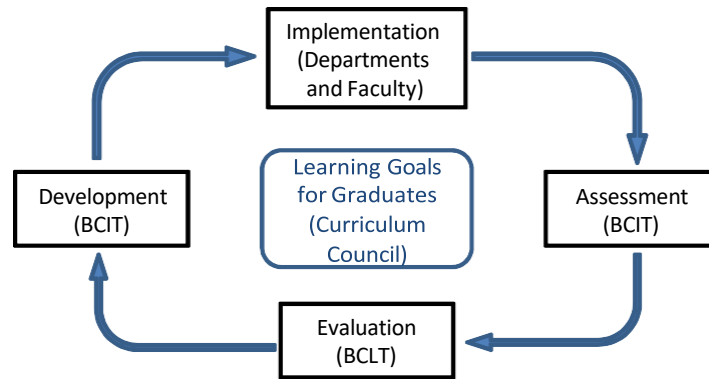


Figure 2. Responsibilities in the Cycle of Improvement

This proposed partnership is founded upon a clear delineation of purview and authority. The BCLT will retain full decision-making authority over course and category reviews as well as determinations regarding Baccalaureate Core policies and underlying philosophy. The BCIT exists to ensure thorough implementation of BCLT decisions through appropriate departmental, curricular, assessment, and faculty development initiatives. The position also holds responsibility for bringing relevant information to bear on BCLT discussions and decisions -- such as national trends and best practices in general education and assessment and local OSU data on student learning outcomes, enrollments, and educational attainment.

The role of the Baccalaureate Core Leadership Team (BCLT). The primary roles of the Baccalaureate Core Leadership Team in the Faculty Senate should to define the strategic direction of the Baccalaureate Core, identify central components and initiatives, and to make evaluation decisions about Core implementation at all levels based on compiled assessment data. The following procedural changes would be made to the BCC/BCLT:

- Conduct annual assessments of the appropriateness of OSU’s “Comprehensive Learning Goals for Graduates” in general education and the role of Baccalaureate Core requirements in achieving them ;
- Incorporate direct evidence of student learning outcomes in course and category reviews. Category review should include assessment of student achievement of Learning Goals appropriate for the category;
- The BCC maintains full authority for approval and de-certification of Baccalaureate Core courses as well as establishment of categories and criteria; and
- Establish and maintain criteria for membership in the Baccalaureate Core Instructional Faculty, and certify and renew membership based on participation in faculty development opportunities.

The role of the Baccaureate Core Implementation Team (BCIT). This proposal frees the Faculty Senate and the Baccaureate Core Leadership Team from the iterative demands of liaison with departments. A Baccaureate Core Implementation Team within Academic Affairs will provide services (development, collection of assessment data), facilitate departmental participation, and direct resources to the Core in ways that are not possible for a Faculty Senate committee. The Baccaureate Core Implementation Team should be led by a dedicated, full-time educator with expertise in general education and who possesses scholarly credentials suitable for a tenurable rank, preferably Full Professor. This team encompasses the faculty development role of the Center for Teaching and Learning, WIC, and DPD, as well as the logistics of assessment duties. This team will work in collaboration with the Faculty Senate, Executive Committee, Baccaureate Core Leadership Team, and Curriculum Council, directing resources to faculty and course development, coordinating advising practice in relation to the Baccaureate Core, promoting visibility of the Baccaureate Core within OSU’s institutional identity, and assessing student outcomes relative to Learning Goals and Learning Outcomes established by the Senate. Figure 3 illustrates the administrative and logistical support services that the BCIT will provide to the BCLT.

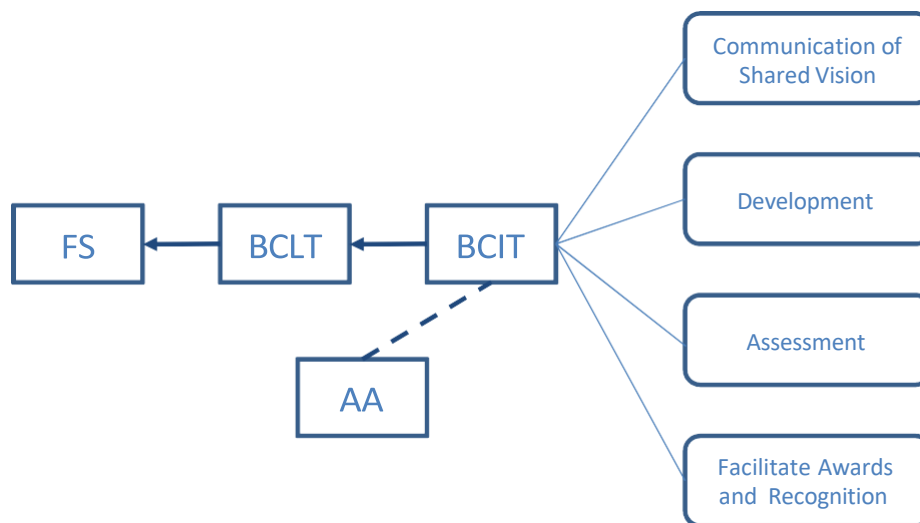


Figure 3. Role of the Baccaureate Core Implementation Team

To codify and promote the collaborative nature of this expectation, two further provisions ensure direct faculty involvement in the administrative component of Baccaureate Core leadership:

- The Baccaureate Core Implementation Team will include direct and ongoing involvement of tenured OSU faculty members in fixed-term, partial-FTE administrative appointments overseeing specific aspects of the Baccaureate Core; and
- Annual review of the BCIT director’s performance should include direct input from the Baccaureate Core Leadership Team and the Faculty Senate President.

Dedicated institutional focus on implementation of the Baccaureate Core will support updated Core review practices and ensure that curricular vision established by the Faculty Senate forms the basis for student orientation and advising, faculty and course development, and teaching practices within classrooms and throughout the Baccaureate Core.

Initiative for Adoption: Baccalaureate Core First-Year Experience

A quality first-year experience provides the foundation for the entire educational experience outlined in the comprehensive Learning Goals for Graduates of OSU (see Element 1). In last year's Phase I review process, the university community highly valued general education in the academic skill areas of mathematics, reading, and oral and written communication. The community also emphasized the importance of integrating these skills across the curriculum, rather than isolating them in one-off, introductory courses, so that students practice skills and apply knowledge in different contexts throughout their undergraduate careers. By beginning college-level work in these skills early in their undergraduate careers, OSU students will be better-equipped to achieve high standards for performance and to formulate solutions to challenging problems and projects in subsequent years of study as well as throughout their lives.

Writing is currently strongly recommended in the first year, yet approximately half of entering freshmen have satisfied the Writing I requirement elsewhere and frequently delay taking additional writing courses at OSU. This issue is also acute in mathematics, where common math aversion or time elapsed since previous math courses often leads students to defer enrolling in OSU math courses. Such delays can undermine students' progressive development toward learning outcomes in the Baccalaureate Core and majors. Students and faculty consistently emphasize the importance of oral communication skills, and, although completing an oral communication course not a Baccalaureate Core requirement, 90% of our graduating students currently fulfill the Writing III requirement with a communication course.

To ensure deep college-level learning in the first year, the Core needs to intersect intentionally with efforts to improve first-year student success and engagement in colleges, departments and campus-wide programs. National research makes a strong case for learning communities as a successful mechanism for building meaningful connections among first-year students and faculty within general education learning experiences. George D. Kuh¹⁵ identifies learning communities and intentional first-year experiences as "unusually effective" educational activities for fostering deeper learning and higher overall student achievement. Kuh also underscores how these positive effects are even greater for students of color, whose retention and 6-year graduation rates at OSU are lower than the overall OSU student average. Recent local university studies of learning community programs (University of Wisconsin, Temple University, University of Missouri) also demonstrate higher retention rates and academic achievement for learning community participants.¹⁶ By intentionally linking the first-year Baccalaureate Core curriculum with learning-communities and other first-year experiences, we can bring new rigor and vitality to students' first experiences with college-level learning.

¹⁵ Kuh, G.D. 2009. *High-Impact educational practices: What they are, who has access to them, and why they matter*. Washington, DC: AAC&U.

¹⁶ Upcraft, Gardner, Barefoot. 2005. *Challenging and Supporting the First-Year Student: A Handbook for Improving the First Year of College*. Jossey-Bass.

The proposal:

1. A revised Baccalaureate Core will require satisfactory completion of three college-level skills courses during a student's freshman year. These courses include:

- Writing 121,
- Mathematics (according to placement information), and
- Oral communication

Further, to reinforce the progressive, developmental nature of writing skills and in anticipation of WIC courses in the upper-class years, we recommend that OSU require students to complete satisfactorily the Writing II requirement no later than the end of the sophomore year (or, for transfer students, no later than the end of the third quarter of study at OSU).

Finally we recommend replacing the current Writing III requirement with an oral communication requirement, fulfilled by satisfactorily by completing COMM 111, 114, or 218 in the freshman year, as indicated above. (Note that currently 90% of graduating students fulfill the Writing III requirement with a communication course.)

Because OSU faculty members have consistently identified students' writing skills as a major area of concern, we recommend that the Faculty Senate commission a separate faculty committee to review in detail the current writing components of the Baccalaureate Core, including Skills (Wr I, II), WIC, and major programs. The committee should determine their effectiveness within the current structure as well as in the emerging revised implementation, and make future recommendations for improvements, including possible advising models to help guide students into the writing courses that are most appropriate for them. We recommend lending particular attention to how reading skills may be developed within these requirements. In addition, to address faculty concerns about students' quantitative skills, we recommend convening a separate committee to explore effective math placement practices with a view to ensuring student success in entry-level math courses and timely attainment of quantitative learning outcomes.

2. OSU should pilot scalable models (300-500 students) of First-Year Learning Communities during AY2010-11 or AY2011-2012 with the intention of growing the program in subsequent years to serve at least 50% of our first-year students. Models could include:

- residence hall assignments aligned with course registration (e.g., WR121), with study tables and supplemental instruction facilitated by trained upper-class students in the residence halls;
- topical freshman seminars (1-2 credits) taught by tenure-track instructors that integrate Core Perspectives courses with Skills requirements, or
- enhanced U-Engage curricula with linked registration that integrate academic success skills with Core Skills courses and/or topical Perspectives courses
- a first-year learning community in collaboration with INTO-OSU, potentially involving conversation partnerships aligned with course registration to encourage development of global competency

All these options would facilitate small-group learning experiences (e.g., 25 students) and more opportunity for faculty/student interaction and mentoring. The University Council on Student Engagement and Experience should develop program specifics in consultation with the new

Baccalaureate Core Leadership and Implementation Teams, Housing and Dining Services, and other relevant groups.

Implications:

Implementation of this proposal will require actions with responsibility indicated:

1. Improving course access/availability, including the guarantee of seats for first-year students in each of the three areas and a one- to two-year infusion of dollars to clear backlogs in writing and communications,. [Academic Affairs, departments/colleges]
2. Designing new registration management strategies (such as alpha-sectioning) to plan and manage enrollment across the three curricular areas and provide for linked registration for some sections (and potential coordination with HDS) to support learning communities. [Office of the Registrar, University Council on Student Engagement and Experience]
3. Dedicating resources to support a basic learning-communities infrastructure [Academic Affairs]
4. Recruiting faculty and teaching assistants (with incentives) to teach within proposed learning communities (coordination of materials and schedules). [New Baccalaureate Core Implementation Team, Academic Affairs]
5. Creating new policy and monitoring mechanisms regarding consequences if a first-year student fails to meet the three course requirements or sophomore/transfer fails to meet the Writing II requirement. [Office of the Registrar, BCC, and Academic Standing Committee]
6. Coordinating with highly-structured major programs of study to ensure that students' schedules have room for all three courses in the first year. [Academic Advising Council]
7. Revising the current Skills requirements such that oral communication is a first-year Baccalaureate Core requirement. [BCC]

Initiative for Adoption: Student Engagement with Experiential Learning

The second focused curricular initiative seeks to increase student engagement with experiential learning. Here we define *experiential learning* to include various activities that have the common goal of immersing students in “hands-on” activities outside of the classroom and that emphasize the central role of experience in the learning process. Such activities include but are not limited to clinical education, cooperative education, field work, research, internships, practicum, service learning, student teaching, or study abroad experiences. OSU’s University Council on Student Engagement and Experience is currently supporting initiatives to enhance and expand opportunities for undergraduate research, service learning and study abroad, and OSU is thus well-positioned to promote these experiences as formal means of attaining the Learning Goals for Graduates of OSU (see Element 1 of this proposal).

Phase I feedback included interest in a general education model that promotes and/or incorporates occasions for experiential learning. Our Phase I Summary Report specifically recommends that any revisions to the structure should “[place] increased emphasis on global competence, civic engagement, sustainability, and *experiential learning*.” Additionally, enhancement and institutionalization of experiential learning can lead to increased retention and graduation rates both through the positive nature of the experiences themselves, and, for those earlier in their studies, the expectation of such an experience.

There is extensive scholarly support for incorporating experiential learning in higher education. David A. Kolb,¹⁷ a major experiential learning theorist suggests, “People do learn from their experience, and the results of that learning can be reliably assessed and certified for college credit.” More recently, George D. Kuh¹⁸ endorses experiential learning, undergraduate research, internships and other approaches as among the widely tested “high-impact educational practices” beneficial to students of all backgrounds. Kuh has documented significant gains in deep learning and three clusters of personal development outcomes for all populations of students, including gender, first-year and senior status, racial-ethnic groups. He notes that experiential learning can be particularly relevant to engagement and retention of students from underrepresented backgrounds.

Our proposal for incorporating experiential learning into the curriculum and the Core is intended to acknowledge tangible learning outcomes that are already being achieved in programs across many sectors of the university. Many of these outcomes are comfortably within the goals and outcomes of general education.

Associated and professional faculty members have important roles to play in facilitating meaningful experiential learning opportunities, for example by coordinating opportunities for service learning within the community and monitoring activities that are detailed through Learning Agreements with professorial faculty members. The *Ad Hoc* committee received unambiguous feedback to the effect that professorial faculty members should touch all experiential learning experiences that are certified to

¹⁷ Kolb, D.A. 1984. *Experiential Learning: Experience as a source of learning and development*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

¹⁸ Kuh, G.D. 2009, *op cit*.

meet academic requirements within the Baccalaureate Core.

The proposal:

1. The Faculty Senate shall establish an E suffix and an EL course designator as curricular standards for an experiential learning curriculum; these designations parallel the H suffix and HC designators that define the University Honors College curriculum. These designators will signify inclusion of faculty-approved experiential learning components of courses to be listed in the OSU General Catalog.
 - The EL designator should support topics numbered courses EL x99 and/or blanket-numbered courses EL x0x in the OSU General Catalog.
 - The E suffix should be available for any existing course in the OSU General Catalog (“mother course”).
2. The BCLT shall initiate a process whereby existing courses or programs that possess experiential learning components and which align with criteria and rationale of Bacc Core categories may apply for the E or EL designator and Bacc Core approval.
 - E or EL designated courses can potentially satisfy the requirement of any Bacc Core category. Designation of the approved category equivalent shall be part of the regular approval process.
 - Out-of-class experiences shall be accompanied by personal reflection and analysis by the student that places the work in an academic context.
3. The BCIT shall provide support in working through the procedural details of this initiative. The BCIT shall inaugurate an incentives program to encourage faculty members to initiate experiential learning opportunities and for departments to build participation in such programs.
 - Cornell University, the University of North Carolina, Montana State University and other institutions have experiential learning programs with well defined policies. The BCIT should seek out these and other programs for models to inform BCLT efforts to incorporate experiential learning into academically sound contributors to the curriculum.

Implications:

1. The E and EL designations will enrich the OSU curriculum and Baccalaureate Core experience without changing the overall credit load for the Core. Programs with substantial experiential components (e.g., Education Abroad) will incur no additional program-specific burdens. Existing OSU investments in experiential student experiences will be transformed into credit-bearing opportunities for students.
2. Experiential learning opportunities already exist in a wide variety of courses and departments at OSU. This proposal will provide an invaluable opportunity to track experiential learning opportunities and their use by students at OSU.

Future Issues

For Immediate Action

We have identified four priority areas for the newly charged Baccalaureate Core Leadership Team (BCLT) to immediately address within this new framework:

1. Core Learning Outcomes – To facilitate necessary and meaningful assessment of the Baccalaureate Core, it will be necessary to adopt measurable learning outcomes for the Core. A starting point for such outcomes can be found in the active elements of the work that was completed by Jay Noller and approved by the 2006-2007 Baccalaureate Core Committee. Though not made publicly available at the time, it represents a substantial body of work that extracts measurable outcomes from the existing criteria and rationale for categories in the current Core. Finalizing and proposing these outcomes, and reviewing and revising the current category criteria to align with these outcomes, should be a charge to the (renamed) Baccalaureate Core Leadership Team of the Faculty Senate.

2. Fitness Requirement – Although the Baccalaureate Core Committee reviewed the Fitness requirement in 2000 and found that it is college-level work and appropriate for the Baccalaureate Core,¹⁹ the *Ad Hoc* committee received substantial feedback from students, faculty, and staff that suggests HHS 231 & HHS 241 are not widely understood or valued as components of a general education. Those in support of a health and wellness category frequently indicated that more options would be desirable (i.e., following the “Perspectives” model) rather than requiring a single course for all students. During 2008-2009, financial pressures led the College of Health & Human Sciences to propose changes to the Fitness requirement that incorporate PAC classes into the requirement. The Baccalaureate Core Committee ratified a version of the college proposal and recommended additional review of the requirement within three years.²⁰ Further adjustments can be guided by the proposed framework and vision in this document and by mapping it to the Learning Goals for Graduates (LGGs).

3. Category Overlap – The committee heard persistent concerns that there is an unclear distinction between some Baccalaureate Core categories as currently described (e.g., Literature and the Arts vs. Western Culture – see below), which has led to a single course fulfilling multiple “Perspectives” categories. Clearer mapping to the LGGs and a framework for continued evaluation and improvement of the Baccalaureate Core and its courses will provide an opportunity to truly assess such overlap and make potential changes to the Baccalaureate Core structure. Such adjustments would clarify the differences we originally intended OR consolidate/simplify course offerings in order to make room for other courses (e.g., environmental sustainability) OR reduce the overall size the Baccalaureate Core.

For example, the current learning outcomes for the LA and WC categories were summarized by the 2006-2007 Baccalaureate Core Committee as:

Learning Outcomes – Literature and the Arts

1. Define, quote and or label significant works literature or art.
2. Summarize, interpret or describe, from a historical perspective, the role of literature or art in society.
3. Demonstrate interrelationships or connections with other subject areas.
4. Recognize methods by which pattern and meaning are found.

¹⁹ Report of the OSU Baccalaureate Core Committee on Baccalaureate Core Fitness Requirement, March 17, 2000, <http://oregonstate.edu/senate/committees/bcc/reports/fitness.html>, accessed May 11, 2010.

²⁰ 2008-2009 Annual Report of the Baccalaureate Core Committee, <http://oregonstate.edu/senate/committees/bcc/ar/2008-2009.html>, accessed May 11, 2010.

5. Integrate and engage, through literature and the arts, one's own and other cultures, examine their values, and discover sources of lifelong pleasure.
6. Develop expertise and sophistication in the conventions and techniques of literature or art, and also in critiquing those methods.
7. Demonstrate critical thinking skills.

Learning Outcomes – Western Culture

1. Describe the origins and evolution of important features of Western culture.
2. Differentiate and describe events, movements, ideas or artistic achievements of Western culture.
3. Demonstrate interrelationships or connections with other subject areas.
4. Analyze events, movements, ideas or artistic achievements of Western culture in a broad context.
5. Compare past and present contemporary U.S. culture and institutions, and make future predictions.
6. Formulate a viewpoint on contemporary U.S. society in all its institutional, social, and cultural complexity.
7. Demonstrate critical thinking skills.

There are currently 22 approved courses that meet the outcomes for both of these categories, and 6000 students enrolled in those classes in 2008-2009 to meet one or the other requirement.

4. Writing and Math Program Reviews – Given the renewed priority placed on these areas as foundational skills in the first year, the campus expressed a desire for a systematic review of our writing and math programs, with a particular eye to appropriate placement, ongoing student support and development, and the potential need for additional writing and/math courses at the university level. In the case of *writing*, all incoming students (who have not earned prior college credit) are placed in the same writing course (WR 121), which may not be equally relevant to all of our students. While curricular development of ability-level courses could present significant cost burdens, the BCC or an appointed sub-committee might consider the potential for either self-placement or advisor-placement policies for first year writing classes. Although OSU does provide *math* placement exams, the attrition rate in introductory courses (e.g. MTH 111) is undesirably high. Again, the BCC or an appropriate subcommittee could consider a self-placement system to enhance student success in first year math classes.

5. Transitions from 3- to 4-credit Courses – Such a shift, considered by a number of colleges/departments over the years and recently initiated by the College of Liberal Arts, will have near- and long-term impacts on the structure and implementation of the Baccalaureate Core. For classes already included in the Core, this bump could increase the overall credit load of the Baccalaureate Core beyond its allotted 51 credits. Concerns have been raised repeatedly without resolution, as in a May 2002 report of the BCC/BCLT.²¹ Future deliberations on this topic would closely tied with refinement of the broad Learning Goals for Graduates, as well as specific considerations about dropping or reducing the size of the Fitness requirement (#1), combining categories (#2), and/or expanding foundational skills (#3).

²¹ [Op. Cit.](#), accessed May 11, 2010.

For Longer-Term Consideration

Finally, there are a number of topics that will warrant consideration over the long-term within the next five to ten years:

1. **New Categories or Areas of Emphasis**—The campus community expressed interest in several emerging areas (specifically, sustainability²², information literacy, civic engagement, and global competency and citizenship) that should be expanded within the Baccalaureate Core, but these have not been fully addressed within this proposal.
2. **Thematic Pathways, Integrative Features** – It has been suggested that thematic pathways could be one tool to help students navigate our Baccalaureate Core. Vertical integration would enhance our ability to explain the curriculum to incoming students and provide a useful mechanism to facilitate forecasting and personal reflection.
 - We could propose enhancing Skills category criteria with a “reflect-forward” assignment. Then, students would reflect forward and back in Perspectives and again in Synthesis (where “reflect forward” means anticipating life beyond the degree).
 - Greater horizontal and vertical integration of the Baccalaureate Core Curriculum. Imbed activities that prompt students to “reflect forward” at the beginning of their university experience and “reflect back” towards the end.
3. **Reading Goals/Outcomes** – In addition to the outcomes that emphasize critical thinking and writing, we may want to expand these to include outcomes specifically associated with reading in certain Perspectives and/or Synthesis categories.
4. **S/U Grading** – The availability of S/U grading in Baccalaureate Core courses (but not in major classes) may have contributed to an overall devaluation of the Baccalaureate Core curriculum. It is worth considering whether this system sends an indirect message to students about the worth (or lack thereof) of general education and if the BCLT should propose a change to this policy.
5. **Labs** – There is a history to the requirement for three labs at Oregon State, given our unique position as one of only two institutions designated as a Land, Sea, Space *and* Sun grant university. Nonetheless, the Baccalaureate Core Committee may want to explore whether three labs are required to meet the LGGs as currently written.

²² An organized student movement to develop a sustainability (an “Environmental Citizenship”) requirement within the Baccalaureate Core was a key driving force behind the formation of this review committee. We have incorporated sustainability as an explicit component of the Learning Goals for Graduates. This is a message that needs to move forward over the years as well as launching some movement early (like with experiential learning).

Committee Members

2008-2009

John Bailey, Co-chair	Forest Engineering, Resources and Management
Susie Brubaker-Cole	Academic Success and Engagement
Bill Bogley, Co-chair	University Honors College (and Math)
Brad Cardinal	Nutrition and Exercise Science
Jim Coakley	College of Business
Milo Koretsky	Chemical Engineering
Corinne Manogue	Physics
Pat Muir	Botany & Plant Pathology
Indira Rajagopal	Biology
Shayna Rogers	ASOSU Student
Larry Roper*	Student Affairs
Lisa Sarasohn	History
Tom Savage	Animal Sciences
Celeste Walls	Speech Communication
Chris Ward	Teacher and Counselor Education

2009-2010

John Bailey, Co-chair	Forest Engineering, Resources and Management
Susie Brubaker-Cole	Academic Success and Engagement
Bill Bogley, Co-chair	University Honors College (and Math)
Brad Cardinal	Nutrition and Exercise Science
Dan Lykins	College of Business
Milo Koretsky	Chemical Engineering
Corinne Manogue	Physics
Pat Muir	Botany & Plant Pathology
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Larry Roper*	Student Affairs
Lisa Sarasohn	History
Ken Winograd	Teacher and Counselor Education
Celeste Walls	Speech Communication

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