Baccalaureate Core Ad Hoc Review Committee

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Baccalaureate Core Ad Hoc Review Committee

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Baccalaureate Core Ad Hoc Review Committee

Reports

- Vitalization of General Education at Oregon State University
  - Powerpoint presentation from May 13, 2010 Faculty Senate meeting
- Phase I Summary Report
- Phase II Draft Proposal (February 11, 2010)
Baccalaureate Core Ad Hoc Review Committee

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John-Albert Conlu

Forest Engineering, Resources and Management  
Academic Success and Engagement  
University Honors College (and Math)  
Nutrition and Exercise Science  
College of Business  
ASOSU Student  
Chemical Engineering  
Physics  
Botany & Plant Pathology  
Biology  
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Student Affairs  
History  
Teacher and Counselor Education  
Speech Communication  
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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 report\(^1\) 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

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\(^1\) Review/Relevance of the Baccalaureate Core,
education is being led by the Association of American Colleges & Universities (of which OSU is a member) and rallies around their Essential Learning Outcomes\(^2\) 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 report\(^3\) 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.

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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.


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 2009 and a Preliminary Proposal for Revisions to the Baccalaureate Core in February 2010.

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)

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• 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.”

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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-feet” 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.

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 Affairs 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.

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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. 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

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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 breath 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).

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.


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.

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 Baccalaureate Core Implementation Team (BCIT). This proposal frees the Faculty Senate and the Baccalaureate Core Leadership Team from the iterative demands of liaison with departments. A Baccalaureate Core Implementation Team within Academic Affairs will provide services (development, collection of assessment date), facilitate departmental participation, and direct resources to the Core in ways that are not possible for a Faculty Senate committee. The Baccalaureate 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, Baccalaureate Core Leadership Team, and Curriculum Council, directing resources to faculty and course development, coordinating advising practice in relation to the Baccalaureate Core, promoting visibility of the Baccalaureate 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 Baccalaureate 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 Baccalaureate Core leadership:

- The Baccalaureate 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 Baccalaureate Core; and
- Annual review of the BCIT director’s performance should include direct input from the Baccalaureate Core Leadership Team and the Faculty Senate President.

Dedicated institutional focus on implementation of the Baccalaureate 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 Baccalaureate Core.
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. Kuh 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. 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.


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
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 area 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]
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, 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. Kuh 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

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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, 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. 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Outcomes – Literature and the Arts</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Define, quote and or label significant works literature or art.</td>
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<td>2. Summarize, interpret or describe, from a historical perspective, the role of literature or art in society.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Demonstrate interrelationships or connections with other subject areas.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Recognize methods by which pattern and meaning are found.</td>
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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. 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).

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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, sustainability[^22], 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  
Susie Brubaker-Cole  
Bill Bogley, Co-chair  
Brad Cardinal  
Jim Coakley  
Milo Koretsky  
Corinne Manogue  
Pat Muir  
Indira Rajagopal  
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Tom Savage  
Celeste Walls  
Chris Ward  

Forest Engineering, Resources and Management  
Academic Success and Engagement  
University Honors College (and Math)  
Nutrition and Exercise Science  
College of Business  
Chemical Engineering  
Physics  
Botany & Plant Pathology  
Biology  
ASOSU Student  
Student Affairs  
History  
Animal Sciences  
Speech Communication  
Teacher and Counselor Education

**2009-2010**

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Celeste Walls  

Forest Engineering, Resources and Management  
Academic Success and Engagement  
University Honors College (and Math)  
Nutrition and Exercise Science  
College of Business  
Chemical Engineering  
Physics  
Botany & Plant Pathology  
Biology  
ASOSU Student  
Student Affairs  
History  
Teacher and Counselor Education

*Staff Support: Vickie Nunemaker, Faculty Senate Office*

*Facilitator, non-voting*
The Beginning:

Oregon State University's Baccalaureate Core curriculum was developed and implemented with much of its current structure in 1988, with the later addition of Writing Intensive Curriculum (WIC) and Difference, Power and Discrimination (DPD). That current structure (Skills, Perspectives and Synthesis) and stated goals of the curriculum were visionary at the time, and our community still considers them appropriate for general education. Perhaps the largest two changes over the decades have been: 1) a substantial proliferation of classes offered in several Perspective categories due to planned changes in the university's funding model, and 2) a general drift away from the original intent and plans (and the people involved in that). By and large, though, our Baccalaureate Core was well designed in 1988, has had meaningful additions over time, and remains a reasonable model for general education.

Current stated mission:

"The Baccalaureate Core (Bacc Core) Curriculum represents 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 Bacc Core requires students to think critically and creatively, and to synthesize ideas and information when evaluating major societal issues. Importantly, the Bacc Core promotes understanding of interrelationships among disciplines in order to increase students' capacities as ethical citizens of an ever-changing world."

More detailed insight is available from the composite learning outcomes of our current Baccalaureate Core curriculum. These are distilled from the outcomes associated with and required in each category:

"Demonstrate, by successful completion of approved Baccalaureate Core courses or relevant alternative activities, the ability to create or perform at the university-level in the following areas:

1. Critical thinking skills;
2. Oral and written communication across disciplines and within the discipline of the major;
3. Mathematical analyses and interpretation;
4. Personal programs for a physically active and healthy lifestyle;
5. Analyses and appraisals of significant creative and scientific scholarship, including:
   - evaluations of variability and bias in a set of data and ideas; and
   - strategies to solve significant global problems using a multidisciplinary approach;
6. Analyses and appraisals of significant works of literature and art addressing:
   - the origins and operations of social discrimination;
   - the nature, value, and limitations of scientific methods;
   - societal dimensions of science and technology, and their evolving relationship to attend to shared problems; and
   - evolving roles and achievements of civilizations and cultures."

These distilled outcomes are absolutely consistent with OSU's "Learning Goals for Graduates", developed originally within the OSU 2007 process (2002-2007) and revisited in 2006 by the University Assessment Council (Appendix 1). We want to emphasize that these learning goals encompass the entire university experience, of which the Baccalaureate Core is only a part. The Core and the majors/minors fit together to produce a complete education.
Review Process:

Our committee was charged by the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate to "improve the educational attainment and retention of undergraduate students at Oregon State University" specifically by reviewing and recommending potential revisions to the Core. We first needed to establish the appropriateness of our current learning outcomes, relate them to research and examples from across the continent, and assess OSU's knowledge and appreciation for the Core. Now that this Phase I report is complete, we will be working with colleges and departments to establish options by which students can accomplish the Core outcomes, including but not limited to coursework (Phase II). Phase III will be the implementation, over several years, of any adopted changes to the Core.

Committee members included: co-chairs John Bailey from Forestry and Bill Bogley from Mathematics and Honors; Susie Brubaker-Cole from Academic Success and Engagement; Brad Cardinal from Nutrition and Exercise Sciences; Jim Coakley from College of Business; Milo Koretsky from Chemical, Biological, and Environmental Engineering; Corinne Manogue from Physics; Pat Muir from Botany & Plant Pathology; Indira Rajagopal from Biology; Lisa Sarasohn from History; Tom Savage from Animal Sciences; Celeste Walls from Speech Communication; Chris Ward from Teacher and Counselor Education; and Shayna Rogers and John-Albert (Jac) Conlu from ASOSU. We received valuable help from Larry Roper, from Student Affairs, as a facilitator and non-voting member, and from Vickie Nunnemaker in the Faculty Senate Office. Most of the committee will continue to work into Phase II.

This committee began meeting and organizing in December 2008, and met most weeks of both Winter and Spring terms with hundreds of hours of work between meetings:

2009 Time Line for Phase I and this summary report, with some reflection of intent of the various outreach, research and reporting tasks:

- January - information gathering on OSU Baccalaureate Core curriculum and national general education efforts
- February - planning for input from Colleges and initial Focus Group meetings; begin developing student survey
- March - complete Focus Groups and schedule Open Forums with the campus; complete student survey design and submit
- April - Open Forums, survey approval, and other information gathering to round out committee impressions; regular postings to Faculty Senate website
- May - student survey launched, Focus Group and Open Forums summarized, interviews with other institutions, and overall synthesis activities
- June - presentation of report to Executive Committee and Faculty Senate
LEAP and General Education Philosophy

One extremely valuable source of information about current trends in general education outcomes is AAC&U's Liberal Education for America's Promise (LEAP) project, which contains a distilled list of Essential Learning Outcomes associated with a standard four-year university education, but with distinct implications for any Baccalaureate Core curriculum. Those authors present four basic areas in which students must gain meaningful experience:

- Knowledge of human cultures and the natural world through study of enduring and contemporary questions about science and the arts;
- Intellectual and practical life skills, including: inquiry, critical and creative thinking, written and oral communication, quantitative and information literacy, problem solving, and teamwork;
- Perspectives on real-world personal and social responsibility, including knowledge, competence and engagement in local-to-global civics, cultural diversity, and social and environmental ethics; and
- Progressive and integrative learning across years and disciplines, general to specialized studies, through application of knowledge, skills and responsibilities.

We found that these four areas, developed over many years and with participation from hundreds of colleges and universities, were enthusiastically embraced by the various Focus Groups and Open Forums at OSU. There is considerable latitude for interpreting these goals within the context of OSU as a land grant institution, with its current identity and strategic plan for the future. Some details of that vision emerged from our information-gathering with various campus groups to date.

Focus Groups, Open Forums and Student Survey Data

Faculty members across the colleges at OSU were remarkably consistent in their views about the role of general education at this and any institution, and modestly consistent about what is working/not working specifically here and at this time (Table 1). This feedback was open and un-guided, and the committee is confident that the vast majority of units on this campus would agree with these summary statements even though their session may not have considered them all.

Most students also support the goals and ideals of our Baccalaureate Core and general education (74% agree, with 24% strongly agree), and they acknowledge that it contributes to their personal growth (59% agree, with 16% strongly agree). However, students are consistently more excited about and agreeable to courses within their majors than to those in the Baccalaureate Core curriculum, even in topic areas that we all identify as specific to the goals of the Core (Figure 1).

Across our existing categories, student survey data confirm qualitative feedback that English and Math skills courses are perceived as meaningful, but that only some synthesis and perspectives categories are effective (Figure 2). These data echo repeated spoken and written concerns about the HHS 231 courses, some perspectives categories and DPD, cookbook laboratories, and general lack of rigor and purpose.

Finally, students do not think they are receiving good advising about the Baccalaureate Core, with half disagreeing (18% strongly disagreeing) that academic advisors have presented the Core as an important part of their studies. Even more alarming is the fact that Bacc Core instructors themselves often (50%) don’t present the Core as important, and only 34% of students state that their major professors and instructors present the Core as important.
Table 1. Focus Group and Open Forum results on overall perceptions of the role of any general education requirement, and structural ("STR") and implementation ("Imp") issues with the current OSU Baccalaureate Core curriculum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type*</th>
<th>Common Themes</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>COS</th>
<th>CoF</th>
<th>CAS</th>
<th>CLA**</th>
<th>COE</th>
<th>COEd</th>
<th>HHS</th>
<th>Pharm</th>
<th>UHC</th>
<th>Advisors</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role</td>
<td>Skills (e.g., writing!, math, science and information literacy, scientific method)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role</td>
<td>Critical and creative thinking; problem solving skills</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role</td>
<td>Tools for local to global citizenship; cultural appreciation</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imp</td>
<td>Change students (and faculty) attitude about the Bacc Core</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role</td>
<td>Breadth, appreciation of arts, philosophy …, perspective (out of their comfort zone)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role</td>
<td>Personal growth and engagement in life-long learning</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imp</td>
<td>Ensure access to classes when needed, across years</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imp</td>
<td>Address concerns over easy A’s and SCHs; rigor and meaning of courses</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role</td>
<td>Teamwork and collaboration, consensus building</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imp</td>
<td>Consider the role of increased class size and eCampus</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imp</td>
<td>Provide meaningful explanation of flow/design; tie to advising</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STR</td>
<td>Add service learning and/or broader experiential learning opportunities</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STR</td>
<td>Integrate the Bacc Core with majors to be simple and complementary</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STR</td>
<td>Integrate within upper-division Bacc Core classes (team teaching, multidisciplinary)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role</td>
<td>Interrelationships among disciplines</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imp</td>
<td>Ensure quality of instruction (particularly in preparing GTAs and instructors)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STR</td>
<td>Clean up specific problem areas (e.g., COM, WR, HHS and lack of choice)?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STR</td>
<td>Add sustainability as a more discrete and noticeable component</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imp</td>
<td>Perception of bias/indoctrination in classes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 1. Student survey results (n > 2330; standard deviations average <0.02) on overall perceptions about the Core and their majors. "1" is agree strongly, for example with the statement "The current Bacc Core contributes to my development of ethical citizenship."

Figure 2. Student survey results (n > 2330; standard deviations average <0.02) on categories. "1" is "very important" in response to the question: "Rate the importance of each category in terms of your individual educational goals." The rating 1.7 for Skills: Writing corresponds to 35% important and 45% very important.
Major Findings and Recommendations:

General consensus amongst the Focus Groups, Open Forums and Student Survey is that the philosophy and goals of the Baccalaureate Core are sound and consistent with the AAC&U LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes although a few critical components were identified as missing. We should consider placing increased emphasis on local-to-global citizenship, civic engagement, sustainability, conflict resolution, and active learning.

The curriculum structure has become unwieldy in size and complexity, leading to problems in discerning its focus and achieving the learning outcomes. It is and will remain a challenge to implement a clear structure in terms of class access, course rigor/quality, flow within the overall structure, and cohesion of the system in its current form.

There are serious problems with the implementation of the Baccalaureate Core curriculum:

1. It has become overly mechanical for our advisors and students (the "checkbox effect"). There should be flow and coherence for individual students across their academic careers; a renewed commitment to advising will be crucial in this process.

2. The goals and philosophy of general education are seldom discussed in our community, at levels ranging from students to advisors to faculty to administrators. As a result, the curriculum has lost much of its meaning for many students and faculty, particularly those focused on their majors and future employment.

3. Students and faculty both emphasize the importance of basic skills (written and oral communications, mathematics literacy), but faculty feel that many graduates lack even fundamental competency in these skills.

This is an excellent time to consider changes in both structure and implementation. As part of any proposed adjustments to the Baccalaureate Core, we need to renew our commitment broadly as a university community to the basic (and sound) philosophy toward general education at OSU. We need to produce graduates that can write well, communicate with multiple audiences, synthesize divergent historic and contemporary information, solve complex problems and think deeply and outside of their usual comfort zones. We should create a community of learning in which we all become more informed and mindful of our global citizenship, our environmental stewardship responsibilities, and the ethical challenges associated with human-human, human-environment, and human-technology interactions.

Design Strategy Questions - the next steps:

- How can we best energize a ‘community of learning’ that values general education?
- How can we more effectively develop and maintain a progression into and through the Baccalaureate Core? What is the role of the first-year experience in this process?
- How can we establish more meaningful connections and balance between the Baccalaureate Core and majors?
- How can we foster connections among diverse fields of thought in order to make the Baccalaureate Core rich and meaningful, more welcome among students, and easy for faculty and advisors to convey and implement?
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.

Who will do the teaching and how will those teachers be prepared and supported for 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?

What are the logistics for implementing and monitoring active learning (e.g., service learning, undergraduate research and study abroad)?

Significant changes to the structure and implementation of the Baccalaureate Core will not be easy due to institutional and budgetary constraints, as well as the number of programs and students involved. However, such times of disturbance create opportunities for systems to reorganize and flourish. Reinvigorating the Baccalaureate Core now is critical for preparing OSU students to meet the challenges and opportunities they will encounter as citizens and professionals.
Appendix 1. OSU's "Learning Goals for Graduates", developed originally within the OSU2007 strategic planning process (2002-2007) and revisited in 2006 by the University Assessment Council.

**Competency in One or More Fields**
As an OSU graduate you will show a depth of knowledge within chosen field(s) based on integration of its history, core methods and ways of knowing, techniques, vocabulary, and unsolved problems.

**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 unrestrained intellectual exploration.

**Pluralism and Cultural Legacies**
As an OSU graduate you will acquire knowledge and appreciation of human conditions and achievement, as well as the social world, to recognize oneself in the diversity of human experiences and cultures both regionally and globally.

**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.

**Social Responsibility**
As an OSU graduate you will develop the capacity to construct an engaged, contributing life which reflects an understanding of the value of service, citizenship, and the interdependent nature of local and global communities.

**Communications**
As an OSU graduate you will be able to present and evaluate information, as well as exchange ideas to clearly and effectively communicate with diverse audiences in a variety of situations.

**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.
Proposal for Revision to the OSU Baccalaureate Core
February 11, 2010

Executive Summary

The Baccalaureate Core ad hoc Review Committee was charged by the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate to “improve the educational attainment and retention of undergraduate students at Oregon State University” by reviewing and recommending revisions to the Baccalaureate Core (Bacc Core). We completed a Phase I assessment report in 2009 (available on the Faculty Senate website) in which we concluded that our Bacc Core is sound in its conception and current structure, but that implementation (our current low-cost option) has drifted with time and created some issues that need to be addressed.

In this Phase II effort, we will work with the campus as a whole to revise several key aspects of Bacc Core implementation, including: 1) changes to the campus culture surrounding the Bacc Core and its implementation, and 2) strategic curricular and administrative enhancements and adjustments. In this way, we hope to promote student success, consistent with OSU’s Strategic Plan, and guide the evolution of the Bacc Core over the coming years. Following a comment period ending April 9, 2010, the proposal will be refined and then presented at the May 2010 meeting of the Faculty Senate. Community comment will be solicited through campus forums. Individual comments can be offered via http://oregonstate.edu/senate/.

The attached elements under development and slated for review can be summarized as follows:

1. **Comprehensive Learning Goals**: Creating a clear unified vision for our undergraduates and faculty
   - Encompass the Baccalaureate Core and Major degree programs
     - Articulated/visual representations of horizontal and vertical integration of student learning
   - Map curriculum requirements in both the Bacc Core and Major(s) to Learning Goals

2. **Transforming the Culture**: Sustaining and improving program value and promoting engagement
   - Continuous communication of our shared vision (e.g., the Learning Goals) to the campus
     - Catalog-visible narratives/figures and a modern web presence
   - Coordinated faculty/advisor development and support for curriculum development.
   - Multiple direct and indirect assessment strategies with feedback loops.

3. **First-Year Linkages**: Integrating the Bacc Core with all campus efforts to improve first-year student success
   - Foundational Skills Requirement: Reading/Writing, Mathematics, Oral Communication, and Fitness
     - Administrative commitment to course access and appropriate class sizes
   - First-year Learning Community pilot programs

4. **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

5. **Organizational Structure**: Fostering shared governance for broad program implementation and success
   - An expanded charge to the Faculty Senate Baccalaureate Core Committee to focus on:
     - Learning Goals, larger structural and implementation issues, and curricular strategies
   - A revised administrative structure in Academic Affairs consisting of:
     - A full-time permanent Baccalaureate Core Director as a partner with Faculty Senate
     - Ongoing involvement of OSU faculty members in fixed-term, partial FTE appointments

Background information, rationale and some specifics are outlined for each of these proposals in the following pages, but there is a more general need to consider these potential changes even without all the details. Indeed, many include recommendations for more work on their development and/or linkages to other elements in progress. We look forward to receiving your feedback.
Introduction

The elements presented in this proposal have been developed in response to this committee’s Phase I study,¹ which polled the campus community through focus groups, open forums, and a student survey that had over 2,300 respondents. This proposal addresses the most serious concerns identified with the implementation of the Baccalaureate Core (Bacc Core) curriculum, including a perceived lack of coherence among the courses leading to a "checkbox effect", a lack of discourse in our community about the goals and philosophy of general education, and a perceived lack of even fundamental competency in the basic skills. Because a significant proportion of the undergraduate curriculum is allocated to general education and many of the courses are taken early in the student experience, the Bacc Core is the most powerful lever available to enhance retention and graduation rates at OSU.

In developing the proposal elements, we considered the following fundamental 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 Bacc Core? What is the role of the first-year experience in this process?
3. How can we establish more meaningful connections and balance between the Bacc Core and majors?
4. How can we foster connections among diverse fields of thought in order to make the Bacc 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 Bacc 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)?

This proposal contains five elements designed to address the issues and questions described above. The intent is to catalyze a transformation of the Bacc 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. The following pages describe the five elements proposed: Element 1, Adoption of a set of Comprehensive Learning Goals for Graduates encompassing both the major and Bacc Core to provide a lens through which curriculum is developed, assessed and evaluated; Element 2, Transforming the Campus Culture to intentionally engage student, advisor and faculty participation in an integrated and valued general education experience over time; Element 3, First-Year Linkages, and Element 4, Student Engagement with Experiential Learning, represent the first two initiatives in a cycle of continuous improvement; and Element 5, Organization Structure, assigns specific responsibility for effectiveness of the Bacc Core through a structure of shared governance between the Faculty Senate and the university administration.

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¹ Baccalaureate Core ad hoc Review Committee - Phase I Summary Report (available on the Faculty Senate website)
Element 1: Comprehensive Learning Goals

Background and Rationale:

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 Bacc 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. ² The primacy of learning goals is germane to all learning organizations, from the elementary school to higher education and on to 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) developed originally within the OSU 2007 strategic planning process (2002-2007) and revisited 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; Vickie Nunnemaker (staff). The work of the Learning Goals Task Force was a response to the absence of any university-wide learning goals for graduates. This group developed seven core learning goals at its fall 2005 retreat, but this taxonomy of outcomes has not yet been institutionalized or operationalized.

The Baccalaureate Core ad hoc Review Committee believes that implementation of the LGGs is a necessary step to transform the learning culture of the university for students, staff and faculty. Reflecting our charge by the Faculty Senate, the committee believes that student engagement and retention will be significantly improved with the effective implementation of these outcomes. Finally, adoption of the Learning Goals addresses an accreditation imperative for OSU. 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 learning outcomes for graduates become institutionalized and operationalized. The proposed outcomes listed below are a slight modification of the 2005 Learning Goals for Graduates, as follows:

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 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 Baccalaureate Review 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, including the Baccalaureate Core Administrator (see Element 5 below), the Curriculum Council shall incorporate assessment of student accomplishment of 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 Bacc 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.
Element 2: Transforming the Campus Culture

Background and Rationale:

The current mission statement for the Bacc Core states:

The Baccalaureate Core (Bacc 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 Bacc Core requires students to think critically and creatively, and to synthesize ideas and information when evaluating major societal issues. Importantly, the Bacc Core promotes understanding of interrelationships among disciplines in order to increase students' capacities as ethical citizens of an ever-changing world.

The Baccalaureate Core ad hoc Review Committee’s Phase I assessment in 2009 showed a campus-wide consensus that the philosophy and goals of the Bacc Core are sound and consistent with the AAC&U's Liberal Education for America's Promise (LEAP) project, which contains a distilled list of Essential Learning Outcomes associated with a standard four-year university education. While there was general positive consensus on a philosophical level, the Phase I study also revealed that to a large extent faculty, advisors and students perceived the Bacc Core in practice as a discrete and seemingly unrelated set of classes, presented as random choices on a checklist. In order to better align practice with intent, a fundamental transformation needs to occur across the campus.

A general apathy towards the goals and purpose of general education is a fundamental barrier to engagement. Without instilling meaning and value to the Bacc Core as a whole, any curricular reforms will have limited impact. As a remedy, we propose a deliberate effort to communicate to the role of general education in learning and encourage discourse amongst the community. Additionally, to provide context in practice, a more coherent curriculum is needed where students are better able to make connections and integrate their knowledge. Such coherence needs to be deliberately designed into the undergraduate experience, with explicit activities that encourage vertical and horizontal integration throughout the curriculum. Finally, we need a method to monitor and assess what is being done, compare that to the intent, and make decisions about those components that are working well and those components that need change. Such a process includes articulating learning outcomes, collecting data, and interpreting results to make informed curricular decisions.

The proposal:

The Baccalaureate Core ad hoc Review Committee recommends three general components to activate this transformation: (1) advocacy of a shared vision and value of the general education component; (2) active development of explicit activities that enhance vertical and horizontal integration, and (3) continuous improvement through a methodical and transformative assessment and evaluation process.

Specific components include:

- Communicate a common, shared vision of the Bacc Core as a central component of institutional identity and the student experience to all constituencies (e.g., students, faculty, and advisors), including: articulated/visual representations of horizontal and vertical integration, catalog-visible narratives, and a direct and modern web presence.

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3 Description of the Baccalaureate Core, adopted by the Baccalaureate Core Committee. February 14, 2007
4 http://www.aacu.org/leap/vision.cfm (accessed 02/02/2010)
• Provide development opportunities for faculty and advisors that encompass the Bacc Core on a programmatic level, including orientation to Bacc Core philosophy, pedagogy, structure, and its relationship to OSU’s Learning Goals.
• Establish the “Baccalaureate Core Instructional Faculty”, consisting of OSU faculty members who have completed orientation and development specific to the Bacc Core; members should be listed in the General Catalog.
• Greater horizontal and vertical integration of the Bacc Core Curriculum. Imbed activities that prompt students to “reflect forward” at the beginning of their university experience and “reflect back” towards the end.
• Expand opportunities to develop pedagogical expertise and innovations that promote student achievement of learning goals, such as active and collaborative learning activities, in the various general education contexts.
• Development and implementation of transformative assessment and evaluation strategies to insure quality and rigor. Incorporate assessment processes into review of Bacc Core courses, categories, and learning goals.

Implications:

1. Currently all elements of development, implementation, assessment and evaluation related to the Bacc Core are overseen by a Faculty Senate committee. It is unrealistic to think that a coherent and explicit message can be delivered by faculty as one component of their service activity. There needs to be an administrative facet that is responsible for the specific items above and to advocate for the Bacc Core, in general. The organizational structure is addressed in Element 5 of this proposal.
2. Strategies need to be developed in collaboration with faculty, advisors, and departments for promotion of the Bacc Cores vision, for development of explicit activities that lead to horizontal and vertical integration, and for assessment and evaluation. There will need to be buy-in and participation from the diverse constituencies that interact with the Bacc Core.
Element 3: First-Year Linkages

Background and Rationale:

The first, focused curricular initiative forms a richer, more coherent student experience through establishing first-year linkages. 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 basic academic skill areas – mathematics, reading, and oral and written communication – as well as in life skills in health and wellness. The community also valued opportunities for active and collaborative learning as important components of the first-year experience. Together these experiences should form the first stage of an extensive educational process in which students will practice skills and apply knowledge in different contexts throughout their undergraduate careers. By gaining early practice and guidance in foundational skills and knowledge, 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 requirement, 90% of our graduating students currently fulfill the Writing III requirement with a communication course. The University has recently enacted significant changes to the Fitness requirement (i.e., adjustments to HHS231, paired with HHS241 or PAC courses). This process of evaluation and alignment should be continued in the context of the Learning Goals for Graduates of OSU.

To ensure deep foundational learning in the first year, the Core needs to link thoughtfully 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 students and faculty within general education learning experiences. George D. Kuh\(^5\) 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.\(^6\) By intentionally linking the first-year curriculum with learning-communities and other first-year experiences, we can bring new rigor and vitality to the critical first-year year of study.

The proposal:

1. A revised Bacc Core will require satisfactory completion of **four foundational skills courses** during a student’s freshman year. These courses include:

   - Writing (121 or a 200-level course, depending on transfer units and/or placement),
   - Mathematics (according to placement information),

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• Oral communication, and  
• Health and wellness (with a co-requisite small-class lab/PAC 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 Bacc Core, including 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 considering a placement requirement. We recommend lending particular attention to how to ensure that the new oral communication requirement does not reduce the total number of writing courses during a student’s career, and 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

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 Bacc Core Administrative Team (see Element 5), 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 four areas, a one- to two-year infusion of dollars to clear backlogs in writing and communications, and development of additional fitness offerings. [Academic Affairs, departments/colleges]  
2. Designing new registration management strategies (such as alpha-sectioning) to plan and manage enrollment across the four 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 Bacc Core Administrative Team, Academic Affairs]  
5. Creating new policy and monitoring mechanisms regarding consequences if a first-year student fails to meet the four course requirements. [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 four courses in the first year. [Academic Advising Council]  
7. Revising the current Skills requirements such that oral communication is a first-year Bacc Core requirement. [BCC]
Element 4: Student Engagement with Experiential Learning

Background and Rationale:

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 local-to-global citizenship, 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, 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. Kuh 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.

The proposal:

1. Students may use service/hands on experiences to fulfill existing Baccalaureate Core course requirements (Student-Initiated). OSU creates an Experiential Learning (‘EL’) prefix or designator for new or existing EL opportunities.

   - Students may substitute one of these ‘EL’ designations to fulfill various existing Bacc Core requirements (e.g., a student could apply to fulfill the ‘Cultural Diversity’ category through a study abroad experience with an EL204 (Immersion in a Different Culture) designator.
   - Students must submit proposals for approval before the ‘ELXX’ substitution is permitted. To ensure that credit-bearing experiential learning opportunities meet the criteria for college level learning, explicit goals, intended outcomes, credit hours and method(s) for assessment of learning must be detailed and approved in advance. Review and approval of proposals could be carried out by an Experiential Learning Coordinator – a fixed-term appointee drawn from faculty ranks and positioned within the new Baccalaureate Core administrative structure).

2. Students may fulfill existing Baccalaureate Core categories using courses that formally incorporate an experiential learning component (Faculty-Initiated)
   - Professors and instructors of Baccalaureate Core courses may submit proposals to the Baccalaureate Core Committee to add the ‘EL’ suffix to their class. The suffix may or may not be accompanied by increased credit hours. A survey of current courses and programs indicates that experiential learning opportunities already exist in a variety of courses and departments at OSU. The EL suffix for new and existing courses that incorporate experiential learning would be valuable in tracking experiential learning opportunities and their use by students at OSU.

Implications:

1. The Experiential Learning (‘EL’) prefix will enrich of the current Bacc Core experience without changing the overall credit load for the Bacc Core, nor being resource intensive for OSU (because students take fewer classes here, yet get OSU credit for such experiences).
2. The Experiential Learning (‘EL’) suffix will contain built-in oversight and academic link through Bacc Core professors/instructors and would enrich existing courses and allow some to achieve previously unrealized potential. It will allow some faculty members who have made previous efforts to incorporate experiential learning to gain recognition for that work (by having the efforts acknowledged with additional course credit, if such is the case). By its nature experiential learning tends to promote synthesis of knowledge and skills from different areas and might be especially useful in helping students fulfill a Synthesis requirement in a meaningful way.
3. In the context of the Bacc Core, these out-of-class experiences will need to be accompanied by personal reflection and analysis by the student that places the work in an academic context. The ‘EL’ prefix would require administrative structure to standardize procedures for approval and assessment. Cornell University, the University of North Carolina, Montana State University and other institutions have successful programs of this kind with well defined policies and procedures for assessment of experiential learning based on the recommendations of the Council for Adult and Experiential learning. Proper guidelines and administrative oversight would also be needed for ‘EL’ suffix. The implementation and assessment mechanisms will need to be developed by the Baccalaureate Core Administrative Team and approved by the Baccalaureate Core Committee (Element 5).
Element 5: Organizational Structure

Background and Rationale:

The two principle criticisms of the Bacc Core are: 1) diffusion in the implementation and 2) the lack of tangible assessment of the Bacc Core’s effectiveness. University accreditation reports have noted the lack of infrastructure for gauging, through direct evidence, whether the Bacc Core delivers its intended learning outcomes. There is therefore no basis to show that structural changes are needed in the Bacc Core. In addition, the review committee has noted that fundamental issues affecting the Bacc Core are often discussed and analyzed by the community but are rarely acted upon. This element of the proposal develops a revitalized organizational framework in a faculty-administration model of shared governance dedicated to communication of the philosophy, enhancement of curricular integration, and learner-focused assessment of the Bacc Core.

The Standing Rules of the Baccalaureate Core Committee (BCC) require periodic review of courses by categories based on inspection of syllabi and prepared instructor narratives. Decertification of Bacc Core courses is rare, occurring only after repeated failures to resolve deficiencies in syllabi. With no direct review of student learning outcomes at the course or program level, the BCC lacks data to judge whether the Bacc Core effectively promotes student achievement of learning goals. These factors have contributed to a culture in which the integrative features of the Bacc Core are obfuscated by long lists of courses. Large enrollment courses flourish despite uncertain standards of rigor and tenuous connections between category criteria and actual learning outcomes.

Over the years, the BCC has shared responsibility for Bacc Core oversight with a shifting array of administrative leaders forced to balance diverse priorities that often competed with the needs of the Bacc Core. The BCC has struggled to address the multi-faceted general education needs of thousands of students within the service component of faculty position descriptions. We are proposing changes to BCC review practices to address these challenges. However, because the Bacc Core is the most powerful lever available to enhance retention and graduation rates, we are supporting ongoing realignment of faculty development and administrative resources in Academic Affairs, and we are proposing that those resources be focused on the Bacc Core. We emphasize that establishment of the Bacc Core Administrative Team involves no new dollars and no expansion of administrative FTE. Rather, our proposal is that ongoing reorganization within Academic Affairs should re-dedicate existing funds and FTE to administration of the Core.

The proposal:

The shared governance model includes a revised role of the BCC and the establishment of the Baccalaureate Core Administrative Team (BCAT) within Academic Affairs. 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 Bacc Core within the Faculty Senate and the university administrative structure. Figure 2 identifies specific primary responsibilities in the cycle of continuous improvement.

This proposed administrative/faculty partnership is founded upon a clear delineation of purview and authority. The BCC will retain full decision-making authority over course and category reviews as well as determinations regarding Bacc Core policies and underlying philosophy. The new administrative position exists to ensure thorough implementation of BCC decisions through appropriate curricular, assessment and faculty development initiatives. The administrative position also holds responsibility for bringing relevant information to bear on BCC 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.

1. **The role of the Baccalaureate Core Committee (BCC).** This proposal intends to remove the burden in the mechanics of implementing and assessing the Bacc Core from the BCC. This change will free the committee to define the strategic direction of the Bacc Core, identify central components and initiatives, and to make evaluation decisions at all levels based on compiled assessment data. The following procedural changes would be made to the BCC:

   - Conduct annual assessments of the appropriateness of OSU’s “Comprehensive Learning Goals for Graduates” in general education and the role of Bacc 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 Bacc Core courses; 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.

2. **The role of the Baccalaureate Core Administrative Team (BCAT).** Administrative accountability for the Bacc Core should be placed in the hands of an administrative team led by a dedicated, full-time administrator with expertise in general education and who possesses scholarly credentials suitable for a tenurable rank, preferably Full Professor. This administrative team should work in collaboration with the Faculty Senate, Executive Committee, Baccalaureate Core Committee, and Curriculum Council, directing resources to faculty and course development, coordinating advising practice in relation to the Bacc Core, promoting visibility of the Bacc Core within OSU’s institutional identity, and assessing student outcomes relative to Learning Goals established by the Senate and in alignment with professional accreditation assessment practices in Business, Education, Engineering, Pharmacy, and Veterinary Medicine.

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

   - The Baccalaureate Core administrative team should include direct and ongoing involvement of tenured OSU faculty members in fixed-term, partial-FTE administrative appointments overseeing specific aspects of the Bacc Core; and
   - Annual review of the administrative leader’s performance should include direct input from the Faculty Senate President.

Dedicated administrative focus on implementation of the Bacc Core will support updated BCC 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 actual practices within classrooms and throughout the Bacc Core.
Implications:

These ideas entail redirection of resources within Academic Affairs as well as changes in Faculty Senate practices of curricular review. The Baccalaureate Core touches the lives of all OSU undergraduates and directly involves a large proportion of the OSU Faculty. As such, University leadership acknowledges that the Bacc Core is a key contributor to the overall student experience and a powerful lever for enhancement of institutional retention and graduation rates. Most importantly, success of this proposal depends on the establishment of a dynamic faculty/administration partnership in shared governance that reinforces the curricular vision of the Faculty with administrative commitment, that informs the Faculty with expertise and currency in national trends and practice in general education, and that supports effective teaching and learning with real assessment of student learning in the Bacc Core.
Baccalaureate Core Ad Hoc Review Committee

- Members
- Comments Form
- Reports

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Baccalaureate Core Ad Hoc Review Committee

- 2009-2010
- 2008-2009