THE UNIVERSITY OF
ALABAMA

MINUTES
Core Curriculum Oversight Committee
8:30 to 9:30am, January 27, 2016
NERC 1012

Agenda

People attending the meeting: Joe Phelps, Melondie Carter, Ed Merrill, Liza Wilson, Cynthia Sunal, Tom Wilson, Jef Naidoo, Thomas Robinson, Heather White, Carmen Mayer, Marysia Galbraith, Ray White, Luke Niiler, Brenda Hunter, Ginger Bishop, Dixie MacNeil, Javonda Williams, Amanda Thompson, Zarie Blackburn, Jacob Jones, Mary Ellen Hanna, David Cordes

1. Review of the DRAFT minutes from the last meeting – corrections? approval?
    a. No corrections noted, minutes were approved

2. Course Review Status
    a. Check myBama for any outstanding reviews
    b. Remember to Vote
    c. Comments on the review process
        i. Current status
            1. approximately 5 courses are still being reviewed (resubmissions)
            2. about 15 courses are still being voted on (no clear majority)
        ii. Confusion regarding the comments at the bottom of the course listing.
            1. If there is a "rollback" indicated, then the course has been rolled back and resubmitted to address specific issues
            2. Some comments at the bottom of a course listing can be from a previous review of the course (prior to correction)
        iii. Some courses had been moved forward for voting with negative comments. This is a subjective decision on the part of the sub-committee chair. This probably involved discussions with the department and with the reviewers. However, these discussions are not always captured in the comments for the course.
        iv. General feeling that the wording for some of the review criteria can be improved

3. What is the purpose of the core curriculum?
    a. Faculty, students and parents often stay awake at night thinking on questions such as:
        i. Why does UA have a core curriculum?
        ii. What does UA expect to accomplish by having a core?
    b. Handout – what people thought regarding the Core Curriculum in 1982 (a long time ago)
    c. We (CCOC) have not had recent discussions on the purpose of the core
    d. Process
        i. Divide into small groups for better conversation and discussion
        ii. Spend 15-20 minutes on the question "what is the purpose of the core"
        iii. Report out to the larger group

e. Individual Group Reports
    i. Group #1
        1. Liked the document from 1982
        2. Felt the document could benefit from organization. The core is defined as paragraph 4 on the first page and the paragraph right after point 8 on page 2. Everything else falls into an appendix. With this, the core is:

> The purpose of the core curriculum is not to return to the past, but to establish a balance among legitimate interests in the present, so that professional education, general education, and freedom for electives are balanced in proportions that the University community deems appropriate. In short, the core curriculum is based upon the assumption that no one can become knowledgeable in every field, but that there are nevertheless certain skills, subjects, and methodologies that no educated person should be without. The essential skills include writing, both as an analytical tool and as a means of communication; critical reading; and the ability to perform mathematical computations beyond the level of college algebra. In the broadest sense, the essential subject matter is a knowledge of one's own culture and an awareness of other cultures. And the essential methodologies may be listed as symbolic and deductive (e.g., mathematics and symbolic logic); quantitative and inductive (e.g., physical, biological, social, and behavioral sciences); and rhetorical (e.g., ethics and aesthetics).

    ii. Group #2
        1. Didn't spend a lot of time on the 1982 document
        2. Need to make the purpose of the core explicit
        3. Should emphasize the idea of a core curriculum in all core courses
    iii. Group #3
        1. Liked the document from 1982
        2. Focused on thinking and inquiry skills
        3. These skills differ by discipline, but there are some basic skills that apply to all disciplines
    iv. Group #4
        1. Asked the question "what if the core disappears?"
        2. Realized that the core is needed by all disciplines, as it prepares students for studies within their field.
        3. Core provides classes that support all majors (provide fundamental knowledge that is assumed in the upper-division of all fields of study
    v. Group #5
        1. People don't just face issues associated with their job, the core broadens one's area of interest
        2. Learn process through the core
        3. Some information from the core translates into the student's major
    vi. Group #6
        1. Defining the core has us defend our beliefs (think/reason/converse)
        2. The core is really "we the people" as it defines what we are
f. General Discussions
    i. Core should be concise
    ii. Core classes promise a breadth in one's education and are available to all, they attempt to achieve a skill level (competence)
    iii. Core creates a foundation for disciplinary studies
    iv. Should think conceptually about the core – what is the core? what does it provide? what is the rationale behind the core

g. Individual notes captured in some of the groups (turned in after the meeting)
    i. Group A
        1. Foundation for participation in society
        2. You learn process
        3. Broadens your ability, people don't just face issues associated with their field
        4. One can apply these skills to a wide range of domains
        5. Allows you to broaden an area of interest
        6. Translates into your major
        7. We like the flexibility of the core, students select according to their interests
    ii. Group B
        1. Make the purpose of the core more explicit
        2. Show the value of a liberal arts education (can be done in core classes & advising)
        3. Link to the practical, pragmatic value of it
        4.
    iii. Group C
        1. Preparing for life
        2. Broad education that prepares for future requiring skills/knowledge not yet known
        3. Articulating consistently the value of the core in all courses
        4. Thinking/inquiry skills
        5. Issues we face extend beyond jobs
        6. Learning through the core extends/transfers to the major
        7. As a democracy, need people who can think, reason, converse
        8. Creating foundations with broader implications for well-rounded graduates

h. If you have good ideas on how to continue/refine/advance this discussion (what is the purpose of the core) then please let David Cordes know prior to the next meeting.

4. Upcoming Meetings
    a. Wednesday, February 24, 8:30 – 9:30, NERC 1012
    b. Wednesday, March 23, 8:30 – 9:30, NERC 1012