

Report of the Core Task Force to the Faculty Senate

Sam Atkinson
Barbara Cox
Marcia Staff
Jim Swan
Celia Williamson, Chair

Revitalizing the UNT Core Curriculum

Combined meeting of the UCC, Core Oversight and Academic Affairs Committees of the Faculty Senate
March 26, 2008
3:00 p.m., Wooten Hall, Room 322

Process for Revitalizing the Core:

Decision to reduce Core to 42 hours (Spring 2007) → Creation of Core Task Force (Fall 2007) →
Define (Spring 2008) → Distribute (Fall 2008) → Design (Spring 2009) → Deploy (Fall 2010)



What is the mission of the UNT core? (What are its overarching objectives?)

Website (January)

Forums (January)

Task Force reviews Forum input, organizing and naming categories, develops first draft of objectives

Post objectives to Wiki (February)

Report to Faculty Senate (February)

Task Force review of peer institution's core objectives

Survey distributed by Faculty Senate and Deans (February)

Task Force analysis of survey results including ratings and comments

Task Force revises objectives based on input

Compare to Forum input, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Core Objectives, "LEAP" review

Combined meeting of the UCC, Core Oversight and Academic Affairs Committees of the Faculty Senate

Report to Faculty Senate Executive (April)

Recommendation to Faculty Senate (April)

Projected Faculty Senate Vote (May)

1. Critical Thinking

- Independent thought – understanding of why you believe what you do
- Develop well-rounded individuals
- Critical thinking
- Ability to think critically
- Teach critical thinking and reasoning
- Ability to think critically
- Critical thinking and analysis
- Critical thinking and analytical skills
- Problem solving and critical thinking
- Critical Thinking
- Critical Thinker
- Analytical thinking

2. Intellectual Curiosity

- Teach students to use their imagination, think, research and continue to learn after leaving college
- Intrinsic motivation and a passion for learning
- Intellectual curiosity that promotes lifelong learning
- Inspire a love of learning
- Creativity and transferable skills
- Appreciation of the arts
- Introduction of all aspects of life

3. Communicate Well

- Ability to read intelligently, write clearly and speak well
- Know how to find, analyze, synthesize and apply and communicate information
- Communicate skills and knowing different ways of communicating
- Encourage individuals to ask questions
- Effective communication
- Communication development
- Reading, writing, public speaking, communication skills
- Communicate well
- Information literacy
- Ability to communicate effectively through a variety of means, on multiple levels to multiple audiences
- The ability to relay ones ideas and thoughts through different mediums, be it written or oral.

4. Social Responsibility/Civic Responsibility

- Change Agent
- Personal and social responsibility and ethical responsibility
- Understanding of the context for the world – their role in the world in context
- Social awareness – the students role in society/community and how they can/should contribute
- Contribute information literacy to students
- Respect for others' opinions, and for one's education

5. Leadership

- Foundation for success
- Leadership building
- Ability to contribute to society/world
- Confidence to contribute to society (empowerment)

6. Fundamental Knowledge

- Fundamental Knowledge
- To provide students with the fundamental knowledge an educated citizen should know. Instill a responsibility toward others
- Integrate disciplines, knowledge of various cultures and perspectives to think critically
- Appreciation of interdisciplinary knowledge
- Provide a broad experience which allows student to discover his/her place in community of learners
- Fosters interdisciplinary thinking
- Be foundational and complimentary to student major
- Interdisciplinary connectivity
- Discipline exploration
- Leveling – equalize students’ experiences and skill levels from secondary education
- Orientation to college class
- Understand scientific method and how to apply it
- Practical career skills

7. Diverse Perspectives

- Introduce students to divergent thoughts, influences, and values to broaden their perspectives
- Embrace diversity and respect others
- To create, test, define and defend a personal value system with an appreciation of other value systems
- Appreciation of value of diverse perspectives and cultures
- Awareness of internationalization and globalization
- Diversity (all)
- Be familiar with broad cultural references
- Provide an ethical framework
- Develop global conscience
- Understanding of diversity (appreciation of differences/tolerance)
- Cultural diversity

8. Self Awareness and Balance

- React positively to stressful situations
- Develop a “wellness” approach to life
- Awareness of self
- Pride and potential (pride in learning and the ability to learn and comprehend, emphasize long term learning)
- Provide a concept of life-long learning
- Practical life skills

untcoretaskforce | Current List of Objectives

This is a page that the Core Task Force will edit periodically based on discussions from the other pages. It contains the current working draft of the full set of objectives.

As a result of their experience with the core curriculum, UNT graduates will:

- be able to think independently and creatively.
- cultivate an intellectual curiosity that promotes life-long learning.
- have the ability to read intelligently, write clearly and speak well.
- demonstrate personal and social responsibility.
- gain an awareness of fundamental areas of knowledge and the interrelationship between them.
- embrace diversity - valuing different ideas, perspectives, cultures and viewpoints.
- will approach life with self-awareness and balance.
- gain leadership skills.



This List: Faculty Survey

Core Survey > Faculty Survey

Faculty Survey

The Core Task Force is seeking input from the Faculty on the suggested core objectives

[Respond to this Survey](#)

[Actions](#)

[Settings](#)

View: **Graphical Summary**

1. Use this scale to tell the committee how you view each objective and to what level you think it should be part of the UNT core curriculum.

	Essential to the Core			Marginally Relevant to the Core		
	(%)					
1. Think independently and creatively	75	16	4	2	1	2
	(91%)					
	1	2	3	4	5	Does Not Belong in the Core
2. Read intelligently, write clearly and speak well	85	8	2	0	3	2
	(93%)					
	1	2	3	4	5	Does Not Belong in the Core
3. Demonstrate personal and social responsibility	28	26	22	8	8	8
	(54%)					
	1	2	3	4	5	Does Not Belong in the Core
4. Explore fundamental areas of knowledge and the interrelationship between them	52	28	13	2	2	2
	(80%)					
	1	2	3	4	5	Does Not Belong in the Core
5. Embrace diversity - valuing different ideas, perspectives, cultures and viewpoints	38	23	17	8	8	8
	(61%)					
	1	2	3	4	5	Does Not Belong in the Core
6. Approach life with self-awareness and balance	22	19	22	11	13	12
	(41%)					
	1	2	3	4	5	Does Not Belong in the Core
7. Cultivate leadership skills and perspectives	19	26	22	14	7	11
	(45%)					
	1	2	3	4	5	Does Not Belong in the Core
8. Develop an intellectual curiosity that promotes life-long learning	70	17	7	2	2	2
	(87%)					
	1	2	3	4	5	Does Not Belong in the Core

Total: 120

2. What objectives, in your opinion, need to be added to the core objectives?

13 (22%)

Column1	What objectives, in your opinion, need to be added to the core objectives?	Column2
1	key: 1 = key; o = orientation to college; h = health; t = thinking; a = arts and humanities; e= ethics & social responsibility; s = science & math; d+ = diversity (encouraging more); w = writing; p = practical; i = info literacy; n = nexus of ideas (interrelationships); f = foreign language; c = computer literacy and technology; x = get rid of something, (Note: the + sign means encouraging stronger wording or more in an area)	
a	Develop an appreciation for the arts, music, and the humanities in general.	
a	the humanities, the arts, etc.(7)	
a	Cultivate an appreciation for arts and culture (which directly feeds into several of the items listed above). (8)	
c	Computer literacy, (5)	
c	Develop basic competencies in technology. (8)	
c	I think the skills with information technology are crucial including the ability to locate information by using electronic data bases of various types.	
d+	Diversity is superficial. Teaching tolerance is more important. Diversity for its own sake is dangerous. Diversity and tolerance without values and morality is chaos.	
d+	I would not phrase the diversity objective as "embrace" diversity. I think it is important for students to be exposed to and understand other cultures and viewpoints. Whether the students in the end embrace diversity or value the other cultures or perspectives should be left up to them and not be an explicit goal of the core. With this qualification, I think the old "cross cultural diversity" core component is the most essential of the components that will be merged in 2008. (4)	
e	To grow effectively as a contributing member of society	
e	Develop an understanding of the ethical dimensions...(part of #3?)	
e	I believe students need to be responsible citizens and value fairness and social justices.	
e	moral & ethical knowledge, foundations of democracy (5)	
e	Develop the capacity to make ethical decisions using your own values, the values of your discipline, and the foundations and theories of ethics.	
x (e)	More emphasis on the traditional academic areas and skills, and a lot less "social awareness".	<
f	I also feel that all students should study one year of foreign language if they did not develop the equivalent proficiency in high school. Many things that students learn during their time at a university, they could learn on their own later in life. Foreign language is something more difficult to learn on one's own and should be greatly encouraged by universities. However, I recognize that this may be a minority opinion. (4)	
f	The study of foreign languages seems to have been neglected in the core curriculum, although it fulfills several of the objectives, especially #5 on diversity. In addition, several studies have demonstrated that students who study a foreign language have a better grasp of English, since learning a foreign language forces to analyze the structure of language and make comparisons with English. Furthermore, the U.S. Department of Defense has taken several initiatives to make Americans more competent in foreign languages, as recent events have shown that there was a deficiency in this area among Americans. Military personnel now receive a pay increase if they have proficiency in a foreign language. All other countries in the world make the study of foreign languages a requirement; and, in most cases, students cannot even graduate from high school without having studied two foreign languages. At least 2 semesters of a foreign language should be in the UNT core curriculum.	<
x (f)	less foreign language classes	<
h	Occupation has been defined as "all the people need, want, or obligated to do". The core should help students prepare for basic and specific challenges to health and wellness as related to these occupational pursuits. Items number 3 and 6 could be considered as inclusive of these concerns - but do not mention health. This is my fourth semester to offer an occupational health course (MUAG 1500) at UNT. Direct measures of attitudes toward this subject indicates practical and significant applicability as related to students' current and potential occupational pursuits.	
h	something to do with self-care both mentally, emotionally and physically. All the other dimensions are somewhat pointless if a student is unable to find homeostasis in his or her own life along these three aspects.	

	<p>Develop an understanding of personal and public health from the preventive medicine, physical activity, and nutrition perspectives.</p> <p>Justification:</p> <p>1. Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Core Curriculum: Assumptions and Defining Characteristics (Rev. 1999) PERSPECTIVES IN THE CORE CURRICULUM http://www.theccb.state.tx.us//AAR/UndergraduateEd/fos_assumpdef.cfm Another imperative of a core curriculum is that it contain courses that help students attain the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize the importance of maintaining health and wellness <p>2. Major organizations such as the World Health Organization, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institutes of Health, Texas Department of State Health Services, and The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board support health and wellness education at all stages of life.</p>	
h		
x (h)	I didn't see a problem with the old core. If the Legislature had thought a little bit about the effect of its decision to reduce the maximum number of credit hours for majors, then we wouldn't be in this situation where all of a sudden we need a 'new' core, as if the new core is going to be drastically different from the old one. Students and professors expect certain things to be part of a university experience, so there probably won't be any radical changes to the core. Just make sure you get rid of that ridiculous Wellness thing (because it's a relic from really old models of higher education).	
x (h)	I do not think courses in physical health or nutrition belong in the CORE. (10)	<
i	Be able to locate and evaluate information in order to do all of the above.	
i	Develop information literacy, being the ability to gather, evaluate and organize information in any subject area or format.	
i	Information literacy -- to be able to find, sift through and evaluate data and information. (3)	
i	As a library and information scientist/academic I would like to emphasize the very real issue of choices, good and bad, that students make as it concerns how and where they seek information. See the report at http://www.bl.uk/news/pdf/googlegen.pdf Perhaps this relates to objectives 2, 4, and 8---intellectual curiosity, exploration is a must, but there should also be an element of intellectual caution as it concerns where and from whom they find and obtain information, especially in this day of "born digital" information objects. (12)	<
n	to allow a clear exposure to the inter-relationship of ideas and practices in society at large. (2)	
n	Highlight the inter-disciplinary aspects of fields of study (common theories, principles, and applications).	
n	and their interrelationships (7)(were addressed more directly in the objectives.	
n	It would be educational if core "clusters" could be developed that offer opportunities for students to integrate the knowledge gained from core courses and use it in an application or overarching project that promotes pluralistic thinking and contextual planning.(9)	
o	Orientation to college life including development of study skills, career exploration, financial responsibility, and development of lifelong habits related to health and wellness.	
o	Learn how to learn	
o	I also think students need a course (preferably required in their first semester) that would teach study skills, time management skills, academic writing skills, and familiarity with university resources. (10)	<
o	I would suggest creating a core first year experience course for all students and a capstone course within each major. These 2 courses would serve as bookends for all UNT students.	<
p	Include real practical training during the sophomore or junior years (2)	
p	I had a terrific liberal arts undergraduate degree from a first class university--but NEVER received any solid advice on career opportunities--much less any discussion of the job market, salaries, or how one should attempt to balance their time among educational, family, career, and play activities. I believe that many faculty think that students know what they want to do and most likely will go to graduate school, like they did, before they must enter the work force. Be Rigorous, but also RELEVANT! Engage students in serious employment counseling. Employment opportunities need to be expressly explained to ALL majors from Freshman year through senior year!	<
s	scientific literacy (1)	
s	The Core must encompass two critical areas: 1. Students should learn how to be interesting at cocktail parties, and 2. Students should master mathematics and the hard sciences.	
s	The ability to reason mathematically, even at a basic level. (6)	
s	Problem solving (scientific thinking)	
s	I would find it useful if the major branches of learning (the sciences, (7)	

s	<p>Scientific literacy is a goal which some of the Humanities at UNT appear to reject. The consequences of scientific literacy among non-scientists, however, are depressingly evident in a cursory glance at the NY Times, Dallas Morning News, or the state of Science Policy in this country. The Core needs to force non-science majors (yes, compulsion is part of the process) to take science courses, and to pass them if they expect to graduate. Why scientists are expected to take "real" humanities courses, but not the other way around, is a bit beyond me. Allowing non-science majors to choose 1 course for major requirements will (and already has) led to pandering. I would seriously recommend that humanities majors and even science majors take 2 courses out of the "big three"--chemistry, physics, biology</p> <p>--Jeff Kelber, Dept. of Chemistry</p>	
s	Students need to develop strong understanding and analytical skills in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and the hard sciences.	
s +	more options for math and science electives (11)	<
t	synthesis (not memorization/rote learning) (!)	
t	We need to develop an intellectual curiosity among students and develop an understanding of societal sustainability - not simply empty platitudes. As David Orr states in his 1994 book, Earth in Mind, "there is an irreducible body of knowledge that all students should know, including how the earth works as a physical and biological system, basic knowledge of ecology and thermodynamics, the vital signs of the earth, and essentials of human ecology."	
t	Critical thinking skills (3)	
t	Develop as an independent thinker rather than following the herd behavior, conformity, regurgitation or standardization. Standardization and uniformity killing the objective of what higher-education is all about. If a student is able to think independently and creativity, it will never be STANDARDIZED or UNIFORM. Throw away the standardized tests. They are disservice to education.	
t	This would encompass the fundamentals of logic. (6)	
t	Cultivate problem solving skills.	
t	Critical as well as independent and creative thinking	
t	Ability to craft an argument and support it with clear and concise evidence.	
t	the analytical skill of weighing or assessing evidence the analytical skills of being aware of our points of view and of abstracting ourselves from our socio-historical milieux in order to approach problems with some degree of objectivity	
t	Critical thinking, contextual assessment and problem solving skills should be integrated into the core. (9)	
t+	Promote their being pro-active, instead of reactive. They need to learn to get involved, and stay involved--i.e., teach students how to cultivate a voice in their studies. Thinking independently and creatively is fine, but students should also learn to 'contemplate' and 'synthesize' ideas, and especially learn how to ask/state questions, especially in their writing.	
t	Our students come here from a world that teaches the test. They know how to memorize. They do not know how to think or learn. Changing that mindset should be primary objective of this university and our core curriculum.	<
t	Many of the items listed for evaluation in this survey are things you can't "teach," but you can prepare students to learn to do on their own by empowering them with basic skills and teaching critical thinking.	<
w	writing skills (1)	
w	All CORE classes should include a writing component. Because the university does not have a writing across the curriculum initiative, writing is not being taught in all CORE classes, and it is not being taught consistently in those classes that do include writing.	
w	I would also like to say there should be more emphasis on writing and speaking clearly--I never thought I would think this but the "millennials/google generation" speak and write very poorly. I'm an 80s kid, but I did learn (I hope!) that there is a time to put aside the baby/teenage talk and express myself as an adult. I teach graduate students and I generally find their skills surrounding writing, comprehensive, synthesis of ideas, etc., are quite poor. (12)	<
?	The core should focus on the basic skills: the trivium rather than the quadrivium. One cannot teach things like creativity.	
?	Acquire the comprehensive and well-rounded education that is the necessary foundation for creative energy, intellectual insight, engaged citizenship, and ultimately wisdom and compassion.	

?	I believe you have addressed the primary objectives: Life-long learning Balance in one's work/school and leisure Leadership skills and self assessment Definitely diversity Reading and writing	
?	I think this is enough...	
?	Change objective 3 stem from "Demonstrate" to "Cultivate"	
?	Change objective 3 stem from "Embrace" to "Explore"	
?	Teach students skills that last	
?	their entire life.	
?	none	
?	An awareness of the world around them.	
?	None - there are already too many.	

Texas Core Curriculum: Defining Characteristics (Rev. 1999)

DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS OF BASIC INTELLECTUAL COMPETENCIES IN THE CORE CURRICULUM

The core curriculum guidelines described here are predicated on the judgment that a series of basic intellectual competencies -- reading, writing, speaking, listening, critical thinking, and computer literacy -- are essential to the learning process in any discipline and thus should inform any core curriculum. Although students can be expected to come to college with some experience in exercising these competencies, they often need further instruction and practice to meet college standards and, later, to succeed in both their major field of academic study and their chosen career or profession.

READING: Reading at the college level means the ability to analyze and interpret a variety of printed materials -- books, articles, and documents. A core curriculum should offer students the opportunity to master both general methods of analyzing printed materials and specific methods for analyzing the subject matter of individual disciplines.

WRITING: Competency in writing is the ability to produce clear, correct, and coherent prose adapted to purpose, occasion, and audience. Although correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation are each a sine qua non in any composition, they do not automatically ensure that the composition itself makes sense or that the writer has much of anything to say. Students need to be familiar with the writing process including how to discover a topic and how to develop and organize it, how to phrase it effectively for their audience. These abilities can be acquired only through practice and reflection.

SPEAKING: Competence in speaking is the ability to communicate orally in clear, coherent, and persuasive language appropriate to purpose, occasion, and audience. Developing this competency includes acquiring poise and developing control of the language through experience in making presentations to small groups, to large groups, and through the media.

LISTENING: Listening at the college level means the ability to analyze and interpret various forms of spoken communication.

CRITICAL THINKING: Critical thinking embraces methods for applying both qualitative and quantitative skills analytically and creatively to subject matter in order to evaluate arguments and to construct alternative strategies. Problem solving is one of the applications of critical thinking, used to address an identified task.

COMPUTER LITERACY: Computer literacy at the college level means the ability to use computer-based technology in communicating, solving problems, and acquiring information. Core-educated students should have an understanding of the limits, problems, and possibilities associated with the use of technology, and should have the tools necessary to evaluate and learn new technologies as they become available.

Some of these intellectual competencies have traditionally been tied to specific courses required of all students during their first two years of college. For example, courses in college composition, together with mathematics, have long been the cornerstone experience of the freshman year. But a single course or two-course sequence in college composition can do little more than introduce students to the principles and practices of good writing. Within the boundary of three to six semester credit hours of course work, neither of these sequences can guarantee proficiency. Moreover, in most curricula there are no required courses specifically dedicated to reading or to critical thinking. Thus, if a core curriculum is to prepare students effectively, it is imperative that, insofar as possible, these intellectual competencies be included among the objectives of many individual core courses and reflected in their course content.

PERSPECTIVES IN THE CORE CURRICULUM

Another imperative of a core curriculum is that it contain courses that help students attain the following:

1. Establish broad and multiple perspectives on the individual in relationship to the larger society and world in which he or she lives, and to understand the responsibilities of living in a culturally and ethnically diversified world;
2. Stimulate a capacity to discuss and reflect upon individual, political, economic, and social aspects of life in order to understand ways in which to be a responsible member of society;
3. Recognize the importance of maintaining health and wellness;
4. Develop a capacity to use knowledge of how technology and science affect their lives;
5. Develop personal values for ethical behavior;
6. Develop the ability to make aesthetic judgments;
7. Use logical reasoning in problem solving; and
8. Integrate knowledge and understand the interrelationships of the scholarly disciplines.

Figure: 19 TAC §4.28(b)

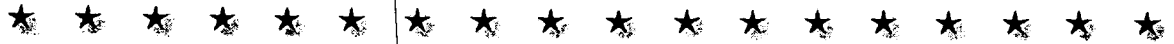
Chart I - Institutions must select 36 semester credit hours of the core curriculum according to the parameters described below:

Component Area	Required Semester Credit Hours	UNT Core Requirements
010** Communication (English rhetoric/composition)	6	6 hours English composition & rhetoric
020** Mathematics (logic, college-level algebra equivalent, or above)	3	3 hours College algebra or higher math
030** Natural Sciences	6	6 hours Natural sciences
Humanities & Visual and Performing Arts Must include: 050** Visual/Performing Arts 040** Other (literature, philosophy, modern or classical language/literature and cultural studies*)	6 (3) (3)	3 hours from visual and performing arts coursework 3 hours from humanities coursework
Social/Behavioral Sciences Must include: 060** U.S. History (legislatively mandated) 070** Political Science (legislatively mandated) 080** Social/Behavioral Science	15 (6) (6) (3)	6 hours history 6 hours political science 3 hours social & behavioral science coursework
Total Component Requirements	36	36
Institutional Option	6	6
TOTAL FOR CORE	42	42

* **Humanities** application of language skills includes a study of literature in the original language, and/or the cultural studies related to a modern or classical language.

** Identifying numbers recommended by the Texas Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (TACRAO) for use on students transcripts, in order to indicate courses utilized to satisfy core curriculum component area requirements. Student transcripts should also indicate whether a student has completed the core curriculum satisfactorily.

The Essential Learning Outcomes



Beginning in school, and continuing at successively higher levels across their college studies, students should prepare for twenty-first-century challenges by gaining:

★ Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World

- Through study in the sciences and mathematics, social sciences, humanities, histories, languages, and the arts

Focused by engagement with big questions, both contemporary and enduring

★ Intellectual and Practical Skills, including

- Inquiry and analysis
- Critical and creative thinking
- Written and oral communication
- Quantitative literacy
- Information literacy
- Teamwork and problem solving

Practiced extensively, across the curriculum, in the context of progressively more challenging problems, projects, and standards for performance

★ Personal and Social Responsibility, including

- Civic knowledge and engagement—local and global
- Intercultural knowledge and competence
- Ethical reasoning and action
- Foundations and skills for lifelong learning

Anchored through active involvement with diverse communities and real-world challenges

★ Integrative Learning, including

- Synthesis and advanced accomplishment across general and specialized studies

Demonstrated through the application of knowledge, skills, and responsibilities to new settings and complex problems

Note: This listing was developed through a multiyear dialogue with hundreds of colleges and universities about needed goals for student learning; analysis of a long series of recommendations and reports from the business community; and analysis of the accreditation requirements for engineering, business, nursing, and teacher education. The findings are documented in previous publications of the Association of American Colleges and Universities: *Greater Expectations: A New Vision for Learning as a Nation Goes to College* (2002), *Taking Responsibility for the Quality of the Baccalaureate Degree* (2004), and *Liberal Education Outcomes: A Preliminary Report on Achievement in College* (2005).