

Proposal 2: NEW CATEGORIES FOR A MODERN COLLEGE CORE

Core curriculum for the 21st century: categories that reflect our current values

The College of Arts and Sciences needs a new core curriculum that reflects the college's values as well as those of our current society. Terminology is important: the choice of words for each category of the core should describe what we want our students to learn and also be easily communicated to prospective students and their parents. The core proposed here reflects the types of knowledge we would like our students to have. The proposed core would replace the B.A. core and the humanities portion of the B.S. core. The science portion of the B.S. would stay the same thereby differentiating between the two types of bachelor degrees. The proposed core would be small enough to support large majors in addition to accommodating 1) the university core, 2) the reduction to 120 credits for the bachelor degrees and 3) the likely increase in number of required credits due to the addition of proficiencies to our curriculum.

Categories of knowledge revisited

The current A&S core includes the following categories: 1) Humanities, 2) Social Sciences, 3) Languages, 4) Natural Sciences/Physical Sciences, 5) Mathematics, 6) Aesthetics, 7) Oral Communication, and 8) Philosophy/Religion. It is in keeping with classic "ways of knowing" (Historical, Philosophical, Scientific, Artistic) and Catholic Tradition (Western Civilization, Theology/Morality, Languages, Sciences, Mathematics). However, it fails to encapsulate more modern topics such as diversity, reasoning and creativity.

American Academy of Liberal Education (AALE): A&S accreditation

The College of A&S would certainly benefit from accreditation. It would allow us to stand out among our peer institutions and possibly compete more effectively for university resources. Such accreditation is possible through the AALE. The College already meets many of their criteria, and modernizing our core would further assist with this process. The AALE recommends that the general education requirement be no less than one third of the total curriculum. The total curriculum for SHU is 120 credits. One third of that is 40 credits. Given that the university core accounts for 16 credits, then the A&S core should be 24 or greater. The proposed core would be 30 A&S core plus 16 university core for an acceptable total of 46 credits. AALE recommendations are for general education and not a distribution requirement. Since both the university and A&S cores contribute to general education, it is appropriate to combine them. The AALE recommends including: Mathematics, Natural Sciences/Physical Sciences, intermediate language, literature/classics, Western Civilization (political, philosophical, cultural), American Society (foundations and principles) as well as effective reasoning, broad and deep learning and inclination to inquire. Combining the university core and proposed core with a major would meet these recommendations.

Proposed core description

The proposed core would have fewer and more modern categories that are easily recognized as meeting current societal values. They include the following literacies: 1) civilization, 2) creativity, 3) cultural diversity, 4) mathematics, 5) reasoning, and 6) science. Each category would be defined by college approved criteria that describe the types of contents that would fulfill the objectives of that category, much as we have done for the proficiencies. Departments could submit courses for approval to any appropriate category. It is suggested that only six credits of A&S core be counted toward a student's major. This would provide a more broad level of learning. It is also suggested that both 1000 and 2000 level courses be included to allow for more depth of learning. Advantages: 1) the proposed core organizes categories by literacies instead of departments, 2) the smaller number of credits supports large majors as well as double majors, 3) students would have more flexibility to develop a unique Seton Hall educational experience and 4) the smaller size allows for the additional credits likely to be added to the general education requirement by fulfilling all of the proficiencies.

DEFINITIONS (from <http://dictionary.reference.com>)

Creativity: the ability to transcend traditional ideas, rules, patterns, relationships, or the like, and to create meaningful new ideas, forms, methods, interpretations, etc

Civilization: an advanced state of human society, in which a high level of culture, science, industry, and government has been reached.

Cultural Diversity: ethnic, gender, racial, and socioeconomic variety in a situation, institution, or group; the coexistence of different ethnic, gender, racial, and socioeconomic groups within one social unit.

Reasoning: the process of forming conclusions, judgments, or inferences from facts or premises.

Categories for a Modern Curriculum

Credits	Category	Examples of Courses*	Stipulations
6	Civilization	HIST1201 Western Civilization ANTH1202 Cultural Anthropology POLS1211 US Politics CLAS2320 Roman Civilization SOC1101 Understanding Society	Can be done in series or in different departments.
3	Creativity	ARTH1101 Art of the Western World MUH11108 Music of America COTH2626 Introduction to Theater ENGL2103 American Literature ENGL2513 Creative Writing: Poetry	none
9	Cultural Diversity	Modern or Classical Languages AFAM2312 African Politics SOWK1911 Intro to Gerontology LALS1001 Intro to Latin American Studies RELG2261 The Black Church	6 credits must be Language or test out**. 9 credits must be done in this section
3	Mathematics	Acceptable math course	none
6	Reasoning	ENVL2115 Environmental Ethics COST1500 Foundations in Oral Rhetoric*** PHIL1104 Logic RELG1502 Contemporary Moral Issues CSAS1114 Design of Programs I	Must be done in different departments.
3	Science	BIOL1101 Introduction to Biology CHEM1001 Chemistry-World Around Us PHYS1701 Introduction to Physics I ERTH1019 Introduction to Geology	none
30	Total	Proposed Core (24 humanities only)	
38-39	Total	Current B.A. (32 humanities only)	
42	Total	Current B.S. (26 humanities only)	

* This is not a complete list. It only serves as possible examples.

** The language requirement would remain the same as currently in the B.A. and B.S. core. Students testing out of language would still need to complete 9 credits in the “cultural diversity” category.

*** new three credit version of the oral rhetoric course