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Deliberative Committee on the Core Curriculum Progress Report on the Development Teams Submitted by John Greeley, 4/3/02

The Portal DT Daniel Cowdin, Chair

Portal DT plans to develop a challenging, exciting text-based course that will lead the students into the four goals of the core (Catholic Identity, Liberal Education, Developing Responsible citizens of the world, and Developing Lifelong Learners). The Portal DT has decided that the course will center on themes. The DT has not yet finalized the themes. The Team wants to start with some contemporary problem or condition to have students grapple with the problem or condition through the reading of selected texts on a particular theme. The Team needs to decide on the format of the classes, whether to have a professor just teach one group or to have a special lecture to all the groups followed by meetings on other class days in smaller groups.

The DT has not begun to work on the capstone course.

The Religious Studies DT Jayme Hennessy, Chair

The core course will be Christianity in Dialogue with World Religions, to be offered in the sophomore year.

The Religious studies DT decided that a selection of core complement electives would better serve the educational needs of the students than would a single course. The DT is thinking of building a three tier system of courses. The first tier consists of the Core course. The second tier would present a collection of electives designed to complement the Core Course. The third tier, which would be outside the core curriculum, would consist of special offerings and electives, one and three credit courses, addressing the particular needs of RST majors and serving as a pool of electives for students in general.

The core complement courses will include a reflection on the relevancy of the course to the vision of Catherine McAuley and the Sisters of Mercy.

The Nursing Department expressed specific concerns about the need for the Religious Studies Department to maintain an ethics/morals offering for nursing students. The core complement ethics offerings may end up addressing particular concerns as opposed to a general ethics offering.

The DT has begun to review and revise elective offerings with an eye to the stated goals of the core curriculum.

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The Philosophy DT George Luzitano, Chair

The Philosophy DT is developing a single offering for a common core course, entitled, The Individual and the Community. The course is designed to fulfill the critical need for in-depth exposure to great philosophical texts showing the development of the greatest philosophical ideas with a specific centering on the concepts of human personhood and communities. The course will be offered as a 3 credit course in the sophomore or junior years. The DT has almost completed its selection of the list of authors to be studied.

The English DT Norma Bailey, Chair

The English DT has for its common core course selected the theme of cultural conflicts in literature. It will consist of a close reading and analysis of imaginative literature which addresses evolving world views from the ancient to the contemporary through discussion and writing. For example, students could read a literary work from the Elizabethan period and then identify and explore parallel conflicts in the contemporary world.

The English core complement course would be a selection of literature courses on the 200 or higher level. These courses would also try to fulfill the objectives that the English DT has selected for each of the four goals of the core curriculum.

The Social Science DT James Garman, Chair

The Social Science DT has designed an integrated set of offerings that will still remain discipline specific. In order not to miss the nuances in their thinking, I will give in full the proposal that the team submitted to the Deliberative Committee on the Core Curriculum.

SOCIAL SCIENCES CORE CONCEPT

One aspect of the social sciences is its increasingly interdisciplinary nature. Research, study and instruction in one discipline often touch on aspects of another. Instructors in the social sciences, therefore, are able to emphasize the relationships among these disciplines as appropriate, establishing a new level of discourse and integration of knowledge. Nevertheless, each discipline has its own intellectual focus and its own methodology. Thus individual courses should remain, for the most part, discipline-specific.

Given this, the model suggested for the new core is discrete and discipline based, offering educational experiences with the option of team-teaching and/or other interdisciplinary approaches as conducive conditions present.

The approach suggested is thematic. Each department will design (or redesign) one or more courses to address these themes while incorporating the program goals and objectives and ways of integrating knowledge among the disciplines.

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STRUCTURE

This model allows for student choice while assuring student exposure to three social science disciplines within the core. Students will choose three (3) courses from among the following:

One course from each of the following themes (these are operational definitions):

Cross-Cultural Understanding

In the pursuit of cross-cultural understanding, students will explore the cultural differences within (as well as between) groups and societies. A major focus could be historical or contemporary contexts and dynamics, which contribute to cultural diversity and cultural similarities. Course content within this theme is designed to increase students' understanding and appreciation of diverse cultural forms, institutions, values, and customs of different groups.

Struggles for Justice

In pursuit of understanding the struggle for justice, students will explore the history or the circumstances in which individuals and groups engage in pursuit of their legitimate rights and responsibilities, and for a fair and equitable distribution of social and economic resources. Struggles for justice occur as a consequence of inequitable access to these resources. Course content within this theme will include (but not be limited to) examples from history, government, politics, education, environmental studies, race, and gender.

Citizenship and its Global Contexts

In pursuit of understanding the concept of citizenship and its global contexts, students will explore the meaning of membership in a community or communities at the local, national, and transnational levels. The claim to membership, along with the rights and responsibilities of membership, includes but is not limited to privileges and obligations within a particular state. Course content will encompass the cultural, religious, and environmental dimensions of citizenship spanning beyond national boundaries.

These choices must reflect the following:

- One course from Politics or Economics
- One course from History, Anthropology or Cultural and Historic Preservation
- One course from Sociology or Psychology

The Math DT, Chair Ernest Rothman

The Math Department will offer a choice of three 3 credit course, MTH 115, MTH 215, and MTH 215 Honors. All students will take one of these courses. The three courses will be designed so that they will have a large percentage of content in common. This common content will be designed to meet the goals and objectives that the Math Department has chosen. The courses will differ in their treatment of the common subject matter to accommodate the wide range of mathematical preparation of the students. Students having the weakest mathematical preparation will be placed in MTH115, while those having a strong preparation will be placed in MTH 215. Finally, students with exceptionally strong mathematical backgrounds will be placed in MTH215 Honors.

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Each of the above-mentioned courses will support the goals and objectives indicated in the matrices by their selection of appropriate subject matter and applications as well as by their employment of group and individual activity-based learning, computer investigations and student presentations.

The Math DT is investigating how to implement some of the objectives in each of the four goals.

Natural Sciences Mary Louise Greeley, Chair

The Science Development Team divided the natural sciences into concept areas: atoms and molecules, physical environment, organization of life, the living world/environment, microorganisms/micro biota, human body/health, biotechnology/genomics, and critical analysis. All these concept areas did meet at least one objective in each goal. Some of these areas met many or all the objectives in the goals.

The DT is now working on courses that would fit into its concept areas, e.g., CHM113/114. General Chemistry and CHM121 Chemistry of Human Health would fit into the atoms and molecules concept area. BIO110, Human Biology and BIO205/206 Anatomy and Physiology would fit into the human body/health concept area.

The Science Development Team would like to have the Deliberative Committee on the Core Curriculum consider some questions that will impact greatly on its recommendations.

1. Will students who have AP exam scores of 4 or 5 be exempt from core requirements in the area of their exam? For example, would an incoming Freshman English major with a 5 in AP Biology and a 5 in AP Spanish be exempt from the science and language core requirement or would he/she be required to take higher level courses in those areas?
2. Will incoming students with college credits taken in their senior year of high school be exempt from the core requirements in those areas?
3. Can recommended core courses have prerequisites or be at the 300 level and above?

Foreign Language DT Jane Bethune, Chair

The foreign language requirement is satisfied by completing two sequential courses in the same language. The students enroll in these courses according to interest and previous academic background. Therefore, they are distribution courses within the framework of the core curriculum. With few exceptions, all students start their university work with

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100 or 200 level courses. Every year we offer Spanish, French, Italian and Latin. Every other year we also offer German and Portuguese at the 100 level. For the past two years we have offered elementary Mandarin Chinese as an experimental course outside the regular catalogue offerings, but it will not be taught next year. In the past we have also taught Japanese. Because these languages are not as popular as others, we have to project how many students we need to be able to offer the second semester of the same language after attrition. Academically and economically it is a much better use of resources to offer these languages on a rotating basis.

Visual and Performing Arts DT Jay Lacouture, Chair

Students may elect to fulfill the visual/performing arts core complement requirement by choosing an applied/performance course or a lecture/theory course. They may fulfill the requirement through either three 1 credit courses or one 3 credit course. All students must fulfill this core requirement outside of their chosen major.

The arts provide an extraordinary opportunity to view the larger world through artistic expression. This not only provides a window to understanding another cultural perspective, but it often illuminates our own Western traditions. The Visual/Performing Arts DT wants to integrate more diverse cultural experiences into existing courses and to develop more departmental and possibly interdepartmental offerings that address diverse cultural opportunities. The DT is now selecting the most appropriate courses to fulfill this goal.