

Date: September 28, 2006

To: University Senate

From: University Core Curriculum-Task Force II

Re: UCC-21

The University Core Curriculum-Task Force II is pleased to present the University Senate with its report: UCC-21. Our report consists of three documents: First is the framework of UCC-21, which is a tiered structure based on the goals and objectives established by UCC-Task Force I. Second is a set of example guidelines for departments and the UCC-subcommittee. Finally, we consider the charge to UCC-Task Force II, and show that we have completed our charge.

UCC-21

There are five parts to UCC-21:

- A. Preamble: Core Goals for Undergraduate Education (developed by Task Force I)
- B. Rationale for the Proposed University Core Curriculum for the 21st Century (UCC-21)
- C. Requirements of the Proposed Undergraduate University Core Curriculum (UCC-21)
- D. Principles Relevant to Departments, UEC, and UCC-Subcommittee
- E. Assumptions for Implementing the Proposed Undergraduate University Core Curriculum (UCC-21)

The Guidelines

In addition to the model itself, Task Force II has written example guidelines for the implementation of UCC-21. The example guidelines show that the framework created by UCC-Task Force II allows for the implementation of the goals of UCC-Task Force I and that the goals and framework together are workable. We have drafted example guidelines for some of the foundation courses, the domains and for the WISER courses. I want to stress that they are flexible guidelines, not criteria. Furthermore, they are not complete. We recognize that our colleagues have great ideas and significant expertise that should be incorporated. It is time to turn the guidelines over to the UCC-Subcommittee so that its members can begin working with departments for their further development.

The Charge to UCC-Task Force II

I want to take the time to consider the charges given to UCC-Task Force II. It is important for everyone to see that Task Force II has dutifully discharged its responsibilities.

To begin, the general charge to both UCC-Task Force I and Task Force II came from Provost Pitts. She said we were to develop an innovative core that would be good for our students. She emphasized many times that we were to be blind to resources. If we were not, we would limit our ability to find creative and innovative solutions to overcome the problems with UCC-1984. As most of you know, we considered many bold options, many of which were not retained, like all team-taught core classes. We are, however, at the point where we need to look at resources, and I will address some of those concerns below.

Our specific charge to UCC-Task Force II (2/04) was:

UCC-Task Force II's charge is to develop a core curriculum structure, ultimately to be approved by the UEC, the APC, and any other appropriate committee or council prior to coming to the Senate for its approval.

On February 26, 2004, however, a more detailed charge was given to Task Force II. This more detailed charge contained the following points:

- Consider the following three proposals:
 1. No change to the current Core Curricula.
 2. Improvements to the existing Core.
 3. Major changes to the current Core Curricula.

December 2, 2004 Senate passed the motion: "The no change option is unacceptable. Thus, Task Force II is authorized to continue its work to determine what changes are necessary."

- If change is recommended, the committee will:
 1. Provide a clear rationale:

What are the concerns with our current Core Curriculum?

Concerns with our current Core Curriculum were clearly stated in the Second Cycle Assessment of the Core Curriculum undertaken by the Office of Academic Assessment and Institutional Research. UCC-Task Force I studied this assessment document as well as complaints about the nature of that assessment. Task Force I also read extensively in the

General Education literature.

What is the strategy to address these concerns?

UCC-Task Force II began by reviewing the conclusions of Task Force I, by also reading extensively in General Education literature, and by reviewing the General Education/Core Curriculum programs of over eighty colleges and universities. Our strategy was to inform ourselves about the sorts of way that other universities have structured their cores and from our background of research construct an excellent model for our students.

What are the resource implications?

Our charge from Provost Pitts was to move ahead focusing on creatively producing an innovative core and to be blind to resource issues. We have done that. As we present the results of our labors, we want to be forthright, open, transparent and honest concerning resource issues that we see. We admit that it is likely that there will be costs in every college and in most programs. We admit that it will be a challenge to us as a faculty to develop new and more efficient and effective ways of doing what UCC-21 would require. The "W" requirement, for example, if implemented as we have described it, will require for success smaller, more interactive settings than may now exist in a number of potential Tier 2 or other university courses. The wholesale re-focusing of UCC-approved courses around both content and learning objectives with their domain/discipline-specific epistemologies will require serious faculty attention, and that comes at a cost. As a profession, we are often un-mindful of the fact that we are currently fully employed and that, therefore, there are opportunity costs associated with doing something additional or new. Some of the opportunity costs will be short termed; some will not. In particular, we recognize the following:

- a. Resources will be needed for faculty development. Developing new or revised courses will take faculty time.
- b. The College of Fine Arts has indicated its resource concern, but there will likely be resource issues for all colleges.
- c. There will likely be some instructional costs as we shift from all introductory courses as we have now to courses in all four undergraduate years. For some disciplines, the change will not be significant, but others will feel the change acutely in both Tier 2 and Tier 3.
- d. We should note, however, that President Gora has requested funding for fifty new faculty, especially to enhance experiential and immersive learning—which is the focus of Tier 3.

What are the tradeoffs in terms of value to our students?

In addition to the six distinguishing features discussed in the rationale for UCC-21, the new model has the following advantages for students:

	Current UCC	UCC-21
Required credit hours	41	39
Foundation required	Yes	Yes
Hours in the foundation	15	15
Exposure to diversity issues required	No	Yes
Course that includes environmental awareness is required	No	Yes
Course that includes International Awareness is required	Yes	Yes
Required upper-division writing	No	Yes
Immersive/experiential learning required	No	Yes
Learning objectives oriented	No	Yes
Themed course possible	No	Yes
Any department can submit courses for inclusion	No	Yes

2. Define operational goals to guide any restructuring.

The framework developed by Task Force II makes practical the pedagogy envisioned by Task Force I. The guidelines, then, show how the goals developed by Task Force I can be implemented in the framework developed by Task Force II. They are the guides to restructuring.

- This Task Force report must be approved by UEC, APC, and Senate before an actual restructure of the Core is undertaken.

We take this bulleted point to be requiring that UCC-21 follow the approval route required by governance. Our submitting UCC-21 and the guidelines to you is in compliance with governance requirements.

- Composition of the Task Force

The Task Force should be composed of representative from the following groups:

- a) Faculty from each college roughly proportionate to the number of departments in each college. Members will be chosen by the dean of the members' respective college. This group shall have no fewer than 10 members. (There was a friendly amendment that this group should have no fewer than ten and no more than twelve.)
- b) Two department chairs and one dean chosen by the Provost.
- c) One faculty member from UEC chosen by the body.
- d) One student chosen by SGA and one student chosen by SCLC.

- e) One representative of student affairs chosen by the Vice President for Student Affairs.
- f) One representative of UCC chosen by UCC.

UCC-Task Force II was composed as required. The member list is attached.

- The Task Force is directed to collect a written report from the department chairs in the distribution areas and foundation areas identifying:
 - 1) Strengths and weaknesses of the current core courses in their areas.
 - 2) Suggestions for improvement.

Written reports were collected spring term, 2004.

In closing I want to note that even though UCC-Task Force II has fulfilled its charge, task force members are willing to serve in an advisory capacity. We'll be happy to help departments see how they fit into UCC-21 and willing to work with committee members so that they can develop a deep understanding of UCC-21. Call on us. We'll help.