

## **2021-2022 TCU Core Curriculum Review Committee Report**

### **Members**

Jan Quesada, Chair

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### **Ex Officio**

Theresa Gaul (Director of the TCU Core Curriculum)

### **Framing statement:**

After four-plus years of intense discussions, development, and planning, the TCU Core Curriculum launched in the summer of 2005. The first comprehensive review of the Core Curriculum occurred in the 2013-14 academic year. This report is the product of the second such comprehensive review, as mandated and guided by the Core Curriculum's founding documents. This review supports TCU's Strategic Plan Vision in Action: Lead On goals, especially: Goal 1: Strengthen Academic Profile and Reputation; Goal 2: Strengthen the TCU Experience and Campus Culture, and Goal 3: Strengthen Workforce.

Formed by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee in consultation with Core Curriculum Director, Theresa Gaul, the current committee began our work in September 2021. We oriented ourselves by going over the TCU Core Curriculum Review Committee Charter with its guiding questions, and we studied the previous committee's fine report. Many of its good and substantive recommendations, we noted, had not been acted upon. After an academic year of our own Review Committee's work, we herein provide an evaluation of the current state of the Core Curriculum along with a series of specific recommendations for improving its effectiveness. For the ongoing improvement of TCU's general education program, we will also suggest ways to further explore and then to operationalize the steps recommended.

Theresa Gaul, Director of the Core as of the spring of 2021, asked an important question to frame our considerations: **What has changed since 2005, when the Core Curriculum was created?**

The following list captures some of the significant ways in which TCU and the broader social context have changed in the last two decades.

- At TCU, the **undergraduate student population has grown by 35%** (from 7,171 to 9,684); **tuition** has risen from \$19,700 in 2005 to \$53,900 in 2022 (**up 275%**); many of the **faculty** involved with designing and teaching in the Core have moved elsewhere or retired; all of the **deans** have changed; and, TCU has a new **Provost**.
- As the cost of a TCU education has risen, so has a **more ‘consumerist’ approach** to that education, especially evident in vocal interest among students and their parents that the undergraduate degree serve as a means to a high-paying job.
- In the current **cultural conversation**, more and louder voices are even questioning the value of a college education, as well as the value of a liberal arts foundation to a college education.
- Since 2005, **digital and social media** platforms like YouTube (2005), Twitter (2006), Instagram (2010), and TikTok (2016) have not only emerged but have become almost omnipresent in the lives of American undergraduates, adding to increased distraction, shorter attention spans, and heightened anxiety.
- As the **public discourse** has grown more rancorous and polarized, citizens equipped to navigate disputed contentions and understand global challenges are more essential than ever.
- **Accrediting bodies** continue to add required content and courses to degree programs such as Engineering, Nursing, and Education, a fact that contributes significantly to the pressure students (and their families and advisors) feel about getting their Core courses completed efficiently.
- The minimum hours required for a TCU undergraduate degree shrank from 124 to 120.
- Over the past several years, information about the Core curriculum and its ethos and value have been sidelined or removed from TCU new student orientation programming, which seems to have compounded the **confusion** about the structure and purpose of TCU’s general education curriculum.
- Since March 2020, the public health and mental health ravages of the **COVID-19** pandemic have further distressed TCU’s student, faculty, and staff populations and continue to take a toll on TCU’s communal well-being.
- TCU students who completed high school during the pandemic often missed out on the level of instruction that they would have received in a pre-COVID context which has had a **negative impact on their academic preparedness** for college level work.

**In the current context, a strong and flexible Core Curriculum is as important as ever.**

## **How the committee went about our work**

**Modes of investigation**—We reviewed assessment reports for the current 7-year cycle; had structured focus group conversations with stakeholders; analyzed survey responses from current students, faculty, and advising staff; obtained relevant data from Institutional Research; studied trends in general education nationally; and engaged in spirited discussions among ourselves during our committee meetings

**Stakeholders**—We gathered feedback from administrators (associate deans), faculty (chairs, vetting committees, survey respondents), staff (advising, Koehler Center, Institutional Resources, and Angie Taylor, Director of Quality Enhancement), and student survey respondents.

**Zoom meetings**—With the COVID mask mandate still in place when the Core Curriculum Review Committee (CCRC) began our work in late September 2021, we chose to meet throughout the year via Zoom.

**Initial steps**—As stated above, we examined the previous comprehensive report of the 2013-14 Core Curriculum Review Committee, as well as the assessment reports that had been produced since 2014 for each dimension of the Core. [Appendix A] Working in **three sub-groups**, the CCRC then evaluated the combined assessment reports within each of the Core components: HMOV (Heritage, Mission, Vision, and Values), HEE (Human Experiences and Endeavors), and EC (Essential Competencies). Among other findings, the committee identified **significant assessment issues** with the current Core. Noting its 15 sub-fields and 36 separate Learning Outcomes, an array of different approaches from the various assessment committees, and sometimes unclear data on student learning, the **CCRC concluded that a more standardized assessment system and reporting templates** were needed. These needs were compounded by a new assessment expectations implemented by SACSCOC in 2018. TCU's current 7-year assessment calendar is no longer acceptable. Instead, a three-year assessment cycle for all General Education programs is recommended for accredited institutions to engage in a constant process of student learning assessment and instructional improvement. TCU had to address this issue without delay.

**Developing a revised assessment structure**—In coordination with Core Director Theresa Gaul, the CCRC met with Gen Ed consultant Patti Gregg and with David E. Allen, Director of Institutional Effectiveness, and began working on a more stream-lined assessment structure. Dr. Gaul devised, with CCRC input, a new four-fold set of broad institutional-level learning outcomes. With these in place, Core course assessment may proceed on a staggered three-year cycle of assessment. The new structure does not impact the current content of the Core but should accommodate any conceivable changes that may later be recommended and implemented.

**Assessment revision**

This recommended change to the Core assessment structure and schedule was approved by the Core Review Committee, then presented to the Academic Excellence Committee of the Faculty Senate. They approved. Next, the four institutional level learning outcomes were presented to and approved by the full Faculty Senate at the March 3, 2022 meeting.

<b>Institutional Core Outcome</b>	Analyze human experiences, cultural expressions, or creativity	Apply mathematical and scientific literacy skills or concepts	Describe concepts or theories of social responsibility in diverse or global communities	Communicate effectively
<b>Current Core Codes Mapping Up to Institutional Core Outcome</b>	HUM, SSC, FAR LT, RT, HT [possibly DEI]	MA, NSC	CSV, CA, GA [possibly DEI]	OCO, WCO, WEM

[approved by the Core Curriculum Review Committee 1/28/22]

[approved by the Academic Excellence Committee on 2/17/22]

[approved by the Faculty Senate on 3/3/22]

Emphasizing breadth of knowledge and a range of skills, the TCU Core Curriculum advances the TCU mission, “to think and act as ethical citizens in a global community.” To fulfill this mission, the TCU Core Curriculum is organized around four essential student learning outcomes:

- Analyze human experiences, cultural expressions, or creativity
- Apply mathematical and scientific literacy skills or concepts
- Describe concepts or theories of social responsibility in diverse or global communities
- Communicate effectively

**Stakeholder interviews and surveys**--In the spring semester, various members of the CCRC met with stakeholders and/or sought out information from specific campus resources to assist in our understanding of the current Core. Small group conversations were held with a gathering of associate deans, department chairs, Koehler Center staff, Core vetting committees (HMOV and WEM), and advising staff. Information from each of these conversations was written up and shared with the broader committee during our meetings. Angie Taylor, Director of the Student Affairs Office of Student Life Analytics, provided our committee with relevant results from earlier surveys, such as those taken by graduating seniors. She also administered a student survey and a faculty survey (as devised with the help of committee members Sue Anderson and

Chris Sawyer) on perceptions of the Core, with plenty of helpful metrics, and added Core Curriculum questions to the graduating senior survey beginning in spring 2022 and going forward. Cathan Coghlan, Director of TCU's Office of Institutional Research, has also been a key resource for data on faculty teaching Core classes. [Appendix B & C]

### **Responses to guiding questions per the committee's charge:**

**Question 1:** *Is the Core Curriculum consistent with and does it contribute materially to the Mission Statement of the university by educating individuals to think and act as ethical leaders and responsible citizens in the global community?*

**Yes.**

**Analysis of mission statement's relationship to the Core Curriculum:** TCU's mission reads as follows:

*The mission of Texas Christian University, a private comprehensive university, is to educate individuals to think and act as ethical leaders and responsible citizens in the global community through research and creative activities, scholarship, service, and programs of teaching and learning offered through the doctoral level. (Updated mission statement approved by the TCU Board of Directors at their April 2022 meeting)*

This mission is informed by its vision (to be a world class values-centered university) and values (academic and personal achievement, intellectual inquiry and the creation of knowledge, artistic and creative expression, a heritage of service in pursuit of the greater good, personal freedom and integrity, the dignity of and respect for the individual, active appreciation for the array of human experience and the potential of every human being).

The Core promises to contribute to this mission through the courses it offers and methods of instruction it encourages. To be able to "think and act as ethical leaders and responsible citizens in the global community," a graduate must have acquired both knowledge and skills and must have completed an apprenticeship, as it were, in "thinking and acting." **This apprenticeship happens primarily in the Core** which promises students broad access to knowledge and skills that transcend disciplinary specificity and enhance the possibility that graduates will conduct themselves in whatever field they have been specifically trained for in an ethical, informed, thoughtful, creative, and empathetic way. Empowering students to think and act in such a way, regardless of profession, aligns with the university's vision of itself as a values-centered institution.

Currently, the Core aims to support the university's mission, vision, and values by offering courses in three main categories:

- **Category (1) Heritage, Mission, Vision, and Values** provides courses that promote critical engagement with phenomena central to the human experience such as religion, historical positioning, creative and artistic endeavor, culture, and citizenship, both

nationally and globally (aligning with the values of intellectual inquiry, active appreciation for the array of human experience). It introduces students to the archives of knowledge required to act in an informed fashion and leads them in understanding, questioning, reaffirming, and/or being open to the revision of them.

- **Category (2) Human Experiences and Endeavors** emphasizes social and natural environments, how we represent (in art and science) those environments, study and interpret them, and move in and shape them (aligning with the values of artistic and creative expression, heritage of service).
- **Category (3) Essential Competencies** provides courses that promote life skills such as writing and speaking coherently and cogently in general and for specific disciplinary purposes, making arguments, and applying important mathematical principles (aligning with the values of academic and intellectual achievement).

This structure demonstrates careful consideration of how the individual elements of the core curriculum contribute, as part of the whole, to the mission, vision, and values of TCU. The TCU Core Curriculum is vitally important to supporting TCU's Strategic Plan Vision in Action: Lead On in three areas: Goal 1: Strengthen Academic Profile and Reputation; Goal 2: Strengthen the TCU Experience and Campus Culture, and Goal 3: Strengthen Workforce.

**Question 2:** *Is the current overall design of the Core Curriculum best suited to achieve its desired outcomes? Are the specific components of the Core Curriculum best designed to achieve their desired outcomes?* **Not sufficiently.**

Despite the affirmative answer to Question #1, it is the opinion of this committee that **the Core needs to be updated in order** to meet the challenge of curricular innovations in general education, changing paradigms of professional endeavors, and a world that is increasingly challenging to navigate.

The committee, therefore, suggests changes that will (a) preserve the carefully thought-through alignment of individual elements of the Core with the university's mission while equitably recognizing the contributions of disciplines already represented and other disciplines that have been excluded and (b) update the Core to reflect our changing world.

First, we wish to place special emphasis on our emphatic call for the **implementation of the DEI EC requirement** by TCU administrators - a yet unrealized commitment. Given the progress made by the Race and Reconciliation Initiative and the QEP focus on DEI goals, TCU seems optimally poised to operationalize the faculty-approved DEI EC element of the Core. To achieve TCU's vision of Inclusive Excellence, it is imperative that this goal must be accomplished.

In the spring of 2019, the TCU faculty voted overwhelmingly (77.5% for, 19.25% against, 3.25% abstaining) to include a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Essential Competency overlay in the Core Curriculum. As stated in the White Paper produced in advance of the faculty vote: "The liberal arts tradition is predicated on the value of exposing students to different perspectives. By working as an overlay, the proposed change will give students the option of taking a DEI-vetted

class from a variety of disciplines (represented in the core), interdisciplinary perspectives (CRES or WGST), or within their chosen field. By placing DEI in the core curriculum, TCU is affirming DEI as a core value at the heart of the TCU experience."

"By creating a DEI core requirement at the level of the Essential Competency, all units will have the opportunity to examine their existing courses and attend to matters of DEI in discipline- or field-specific ways. The more support TCU offers to departments and faculty doing this work, the more likely it will be that students will have no need to add more hours to their degree, but will instead earn their DEI EC credit through a class that already pertains to their major or Core class relevant to their interests." (DEI White Paper, February, 2019)

Second, **the committee strongly affirms the importance of full-time faculty teaching the Core.** While adjuncts and contingent faculty may be effective and skilled teachers, their familiarity with the TCU Core Curriculum and its goals and outcomes is necessarily impacted by the precarious and temporary conditions of their employment. As the common element of every TCU graduate's educational experience and therefore a major component of the TCU's academic profile and reputation and student success, the Core Curriculum should be taught by faculty members to whom TCU has committed support, resources, and professional development in order to reach high levels of excellence in conveying a liberal education. [See Appendix F]

**Question 3: *Does the Core Curriculum best prepare students for academic and professional success?* Yes.**

According to the Association of American Colleges and Universities (2020), a liberal undergraduate education should consist of essential learning outcomes that define the knowledge and skills for success in work, citizenship, and life. Students should also explore significant problems involving substantial writing and reflection. A large-scale AAC&U survey of employers released in 2021 affirmed that the majority of employers value the breadth of learning characterizing liberal learning as "important" or "very important" in the recent college graduates they hire.

The Core Curriculum, TCU's educational cornerstone, aims to educate students by imparting broad knowledge and transferable skills, as well as by cultivating values, ethics, and civic engagement in a diverse world. Consequently, the TCU general education requirements are consistent with and advance the ideals of a liberal education in contemporary American society. Grounded in the liberal arts, the Core prepares students for an independent, flexible, self-motivated, and sustainable professional and personal life. General education provides the kind of learning and training that is not reducible to the material circumstances of one's life or one major. It helps shape innovative thinkers who have solid habits of mind, ask good questions, and make sound judgments. We know that intellectual flexibility and the ability to remain a life-long learner in an interdisciplinary context are increasingly important in a world in which most of our students will have several different jobs over the course of their careers. Taking this into account, the Core Curriculum emphasizes issues of ethical practice, social justice, inquiry-based problem solving, and global citizenship. Additionally, the Core Curriculum provides experiences

and knowledge that enhance students' lives intellectually and spiritually, as well as professionally both in the moment and for the future.

Data collected from students indicates that the Core prepares students for success. According to assessment reports from 2013-2021, students broadly met the stated student learning outcomes (LOs) in each dimension of the Core that was assessed. For report summaries, please see pp. 10-20. Graduating seniors on the spring 2022 Graduate Exit Survey, which had an overall 81.1 response rate, agreed that the Core Curriculum "prepared me for academic success" and "prepared me for professional success" with scores exceeding 4.53 and 4.42 respectively on a 6-point Likert scale.

**Question 4:** *Is TCU successful in articulating the purpose, benefits, and structure of the Core Curriculum both within the TCU community and externally (including, but not limited to, prospective students)?* **No.**

In the previous (2013-2014) report, the committee concluded that TCU was not successful in articulating the purpose, benefits, and structure of the Core Curriculum. In the current committee's surveys of faculty and advising staff, 54.44% of respondents believe students understand the purpose of the Core Curriculum and 51.28% believe students understand the benefits of the Core Curriculum. Students, in contrast, perceive their understanding at higher levels; 76.3% of student respondents say they understand the purpose and 72.39% the benefits of the Core Curriculum. A majority of both groups believe the Core requirements are confusing, however: 74.29% of faculty/staff advisors believe students find the Core confusing, while 60.5% of student respondents say they find the Core confusing. 47.58% of faculty/staff advisor respondents say they themselves find the requirements confusing.

The committee believes that a streamlining and re-articulation of the categories of the Core will also allow those who can and do represent the Core to a general audience an easier path to a more successful articulation of its purpose and benefits.

Because the structure of the Core is perceived to be quite complicated, articulation of its purpose and benefits is negatively impacted. While there is a web page that explains our Core curriculum (<https://provost.tcu.edu/faculty-resources/core-curriculum/core-curriculum-focus/>) we do not know how many people actually look at the page. Other than this faculty-facing page, the Core Curriculum has no presence on the TCU website. The committee recommends a restructuring that allows for a quick 2-3 minute articulation of its purpose, alignment with the university's mission, and its cross-disciplinary benefits. Part of that job has to fall to the highest academic officers at the University. The Core should be highlighted, explained, and emphasized at every opportunity and should be of equal importance with the various disciplines that TCU prides itself on nationally. Further, it should have a clear and easily communicated identity like our colleges and many of our departments do, perhaps with a more descriptive and engaging name and web presence. Stakeholders should think of the Core as a shared project, not just a



set of requirements. The links between what TCU achieves and its students' learning in the Core Curriculum need to be narrated and emphasized.

The previous committee (2013-2014) made several recommendations, and we are unsure whether any of them were followed. Though this committee worked energetically during the 2021-22 academic year gathering and distilling information, we believe **further follow-up with various stakeholders**, including associate deans, department chairs, advising staff, the registrar's office, and the admissions office is necessary to fully determine how the purposes, benefits, and structure of the Core are communicated and implemented as well as whether the previous recommendations still warrant implementation. Questions that could be addressed include:

- How do we communicate about the Core, and who is responsible for building university vision and branding around the Core curriculum?
- Is the problem that we do not communicate well about our Core, or is the Core too complicated to communicate in a succinct manner?
- Could restructuring and streamlining the Core make it easier for prospective and current students to understand our Core requirements and create a more consistent and clear narrative about them?
- And would that make it easier to assess the Core and communicate whether the learning outcomes associated with the Core are being met?

**Question 5:** *What changes or improvements, if any, should be made to the Core Curriculum? It is within the Committee's purview to offer suggestions of any scale, from minor improvements to radical restructuring.*

#### **Recommendations for changes and improvements:**

##### **Recommendations to the entire TCU Community:**

- 1. Work together to craft, articulate, and disseminate a clarified vision and narrative for TCU's General Education Core Curriculum**—with fresh, reenergized engagement by administrators, faculty, department chairs, deans, advising staff, admissions counselors, communications staff responsible for the website and digital media, and students. The original inspiration and vision for the Core has faded since 2005 and completing Core requirements all too often gets described as an exercise in “checking boxes.”
- 2. Use the Core to raise the university's academic profile and strengthen its reputation.** Core (General Education) courses should be the gateway to and platform for educational excellence for TCU students.

## Recommendations to administrators and academic leaders:

1. As a significant component of undergraduate students' curriculum and a means of enhancing TCU's academic reputation and profile, **the Core Curriculum should be promoted, represented, and supported:**

- in academic leaders' planning and communications
- in TCU's expression of its curricular mission
- alongside the Colleges on the website and in other promotional materials
- at Admissions, orientation, and first-year experiences for students
- at new faculty orientations and advisor trainings

2. The Administration should **devote more resources** to supporting the Core Curriculum at TCU.

The CCRC adamantly recommends that university administrators must signal TCU's dedication to the **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Essential Competency (DEI EC)** passed by vote of the Faculty Assembly in 2019 by devoting financial resources to its implementation.

The CCRC strongly feels that the university should prioritize having **full-time faculty** (which includes tenure-track faculty, instructors, and PPPs) deliver the Core Curriculum.

The CCRC expresses concern that the **support given to the Director of the Core is insufficient to carry out the duties of the position**. While the committee considered that the position should be a full-time appointment, they recognize it is important for the Director to retain faculty status through a 50% appointment.

The CCRC thus recommends the **creation of a team** to work with the Director:

- **Four faculty leaders**, building on the past Core model of Faculty Learning Community Facilitators, should be identified to lead faculty committees carrying out assessment in the four areas corresponding to the newly approved institution-level Core Curriculum Student Learning Outcomes. Each of these faculty assessment heads should be supported with a stipend, course release time, and faculty development funds to attend assessment conferences.
- **Two to four Core Curriculum Faculty Fellowships** to provide faculty development in general education, lead initiatives to strengthen the Core, and share in the work of Core outreach. Each of these faculty roles should be supported with a stipend, course release time, and faculty development funds to attend general education conferences.
- With the implementation of the new assessment process and schedule for the Core, the CCRC urges the administration to hire a **full-time staff position dedicated to general education assessment in the Office of Institutional Effectiveness as an additional member of the Core Curriculum team**. Designating one position to coordinate General Education assessment is a practice that is common among peers. Such a position will

ensure that Core assessment is carried out effectively according to best practices in the field while allowing the Director of the Core to engage in academic leadership activities.

- **Stipends, the ability to negotiate course release time, and seed money for curricular innovations** should be allocated to the Office of the Core Curriculum to enable faculty leaders to step forward to share in the academic leadership of the Core.
- The Core Director should receive dedicated time from an **academic program specialist** to assist with matters critical to administering the Core
- **Increase staffing in Koehler Center**, which can be an effective partner in advancing faculty development related to the Core.

**3. Administration of Core:** The CCRC urges the various units across the university that are responsible for administering the Core Curriculum work together to maintain the integrity and centrality of the general education experience for students. This requires problem-solving in the following areas, among others:

- maintaining correct, up-to-date, and easy-to-access information on the registrar's website
- increasing training opportunities for advisors and Core advising materials for students
- devoting Communications & Marketing attention to the Core's digital presence
- ensuring that accurate information is conveyed to students about the Core in Admissions and Orientation events, on the website, and in advising
- maintaining **sufficient** seats in 10000 and 20000-level Core courses so that **all** in-coming students are able to register for an appropriate set of foundational courses in their fall semester at TCU
- looking for solutions to support transfer students in making good academic progress through the Core

### **Recommendations to the faculty:**

**1. Strengthen the current Core by being open to curricular innovations and adopting some High-Impact Practices (HIPs)** that have been shown to contribute significant educational benefits to student who participate in them. [Appendix D.]

Although the TCU Core has remained largely static since 2005, the field of general education has not. Many universities have implemented outcomes in general education that connect with concerns that are pressing in today's world: digital information literacy, wellness, financial literacy, teamwork, and integrative, applied, and interdisciplinary learning, for example. [Appendix E] First-year seminars are also prevalent through general education curricula nationwide as a high-impact practice that provides the means of creating common experiences and building the skills and knowledge students need to develop their identities as active learners in diverse communities.

Though the committee feels strongly that no additional requirements be added to the Core that will result in higher credit hours to completion, it does affirm that the above possibilities should be evaluated as potential redirections of emphasis within the Core to ensure that TCU is offering students an up-to-date, relevant, and innovative Core Curriculum.

## **2. Redesign the Core to allow for optimal flexibility and more choices, giving students the opportunity to customize their Core based on their interests while still acquiring a general education foundation emphasizing breadth of learning.**

The surveys of both students and faculty/advising staff highlighted the need for more flexibility in fulfilling Core requirements—especially for transfer students and students who are coming to TCU from high schools without strong AP, IB or Dual-Credit options. The desire for flexibility was especially voiced by 1) faculty in majors with high credit requirements about the range of hours from 39-63 for completion of the Core; 2) by those who advise transfer students, who may be negatively impacted by the rule that GA, CA, and CSV must be taken at TCU; 3) by proponents of foreign language study and study abroad, some of whom feel that the student learning outcomes in CA and GA are unnecessarily narrow and have the effect of excluding the learning brought about by immersion in foreign languages and cultures. The following possibilities should be explored:

- Consider **allowing students more range of choice** in selecting courses within areas of the Core. This may involve, for example, adjusting rules related to prefixes.
- **Revisit and possibly revise the GA and CA outcomes** to consider whether additional kinds of learning than are currently represented may lead students to achieve the competencies.
- **Expand the number of courses** within Core areas such as GA, OCO, and WCO 2 where students often have trouble finding available sections.
- **Consider whether total hours to meet the Core should be reduced** given the planned reduction in the number of credit hours required to graduate from 124 to 120. SACSCOC requires a minimum of 30 Core credit hours; TCU's minimum is currently 39 hours.

## **3. Simplify and clarify the current complicated structure of the Core in order to improve student and faculty understanding of the Core.**

- A **concise statement** of the Core Curriculum's mission, purpose, and benefits should be developed and shared widely.
- A **clear and easy-to-understand advising sheet** should replace the grid diagram.
- **Reduce or eliminate redundancies**, such as those identified between HEE and HMOV offerings.
- **Competencies and student learning outcomes should be rephrased** in all areas of the Core to incorporate language that ensures active learning and indicates measures that can be assessed.
- **Clear titles** should replace obscure acronyms for the sections of the Core.
- **Incentivize and galvanize faculty understanding** of and support for the Core.

- **Reinvigorate** Faculty Learning Community Facilitators (with stipends)
- Encourage instructors to include a **template paragraph** in every Core course syllabus about the purpose and value of the Core and of that class's role within it.

4. Curriculum should be a living, evolving, and improving aspect of a university's fulfillment of its mission that is informed by the past while looking to the future. While respecting the need for transparent processes, faculty governance, and stability, the CCRC concludes that aspects of **the Core's processes could better facilitate the ability of the Core to be dynamic** in responding to trends in higher education and a changing world:

- The **Emendation Policy should be reviewed and/or revised** to balance continuity with the ability for the Core to change and improve.
- Faculty serving on Core Curriculum committees should have **defined terms** of 3 years with options of a one-term renewal, and committee membership should regularly rotate among the faculty to insure **broad representation**, enhanced commitment to the Core's principles among faculty, and transparency of decision-making.
- **Revisit the committee structure and minimize faculty labor.** The Core Curriculum's decentralized committee vetting structure (which happens through eight different committees/colleges/departments), when combined with increasing assessment expectations, requires a large amount of faculty service. While it is beneficial to have faculty involved in the Core, the committee is sensitive to increases in faculty workloads and service loads. The committee recommends reevaluating to the committee infrastructure of the Core Curriculum to streamline faculty service while continuing to honor faculty's ownership of the curriculum. The CCRC is also concerned that this high level of decentralization is a contributing factor to perceptions that the Core lacks cohesion and an overall comprehensive vision. A Core Curriculum university-level advisory committee with broad representation from colleges, areas of the Core, and the Faculty Senate (including a liaison from the Academic Excellence Committee) may be a more effective means to vet course proposals and provide oversight to the Core in consultation with its director.
- Core vetting committees should **develop rubrics** to evaluate course proposals, thus heightening transparency and ensuring fairness in the process.
- As the previous Review Committee recommended, **a process for recertifying Core courses** needs to be developed to ensure that courses consistently meet student learning outcomes over time. Our committee suggests that Core Courses should be monitored/audited to ensure that they are addressing the learning outcomes for which they were vetted. Perhaps a cycle that involves recertification every 9-10 years would be effective without being too onerous for faculty.

**In order to operationalize the recommendations outlined above in 5-year timeframe**, the CCRC recommends that the Faculty Senate:

- **Solicit a response from the provost** as to how the administrators and academic leaders will provide the necessary support for the Core Curriculum to thrive and contribute to TCU's Lead On Goal 1: Strengthen Academic Profile and Reputation
- **Create an ad hoc committee on updating the Core Curriculum** for academic year 2022-2023. Ideally, this committee should include at least some members of the current CCRC as well as representatives of Faculty Senate, colleges, and areas of the Core and should be chaired by the Director of the Core Curriculum.
- **Require the Director of the Core Curriculum to present goals** for the upcoming year at the first Faculty Senate meeting each year **and an update on progress** toward achieving these recommendations at the last meeting.

## Appendix A

**Assessment reports:** The data collected through the most recent Core assessment cycle 2014-2021 suggests that in most areas the learning outcomes are being met and that the Core, therefore, does contribute materially to the mission of the university.

### **Summary of HMOV Assessment Reports**

#### **Trends in student learning outcomes**

Overall, the report conclusions suggest that the majority students are meeting the Learning Outcomes (LOs), with some wide variations reported (e.g., RT). However, not all the committees provided overarching quantitative data (an overall percent of LOs met), which makes it difficult to summarize results. Also, variations in assessment methods make comparisons difficult. Below is a summary of each assessment report, followed by a summary of trends, recommendations, and questions.

#### ***Religious Traditions (RT)***

- Four faculty in the Religion department examined about 20% of student assignments from multiple sections of three 10000-level course (RELI 10023, 10033, and 10043). The percent of students meeting the LO in each section ranged from 20% - 87%. Their conclusions states that the courses did a **“fair to great job”** of meeting the LOs.
- The percentages for different sections need to be combined into totals. The percentages are listed by type of class, which is useful data, but hard to compare to other Core areas which gave total numbers. The specificity of the class categories helps to tailor a response but makes it more difficult to visualize a total snapshot of LOs.
- The results are quite differentiated. It seems that whether or not students generally achieved the learning outcomes had a lot to do with which section and/or what class they are in.
- We could not determine what specific markers of achievement they considered or what products were being used for assessment. All of this makes it more difficult for the assessors to demonstrate whether or not the outcomes are being met.

- Student choice may have had an impact on whether a LO could be assessed appropriately at all. If options are given, they should all be usable as evidence of meeting the LO. If a sample contains many assignments that can't be used to assess the LOs, and a class is not regularly meeting the LOs, then it also does not meet the needs of the Core.
- Some assignments (i.e., presentations) were difficult to evaluate. Creative assignments are difficult to assess for core LOs. This poses a challenge since creative assignments can be common, particularly in lower-level classes.

### ***Historical Traditions (HT)***

- The HT Faculty Learning Community sent an online survey to students taking 10000-level HT courses, receiving 293 responses. The survey asked questions about distinguishing primary and secondary sources. The group concluded that “**the overall response was positive**” but there was noticeable variation among courses.
- The HT group also reviewed syllabi of the 28 courses taught that semester. The review of syllabi indicated that all syllabi included readings and assignments pertaining to analysis of primary and secondary sources. However, a syllabus cannot generally be seen as a means of establishing whether outcomes were met or not. It serves only as a roadmap, a set of intentions. This may not be an effective element of the assessment plan.
- The reporters assert that by and large the outcomes were met. However, the evidence for this is not presented in the report, and so the document is asking readers to trust the assertion rather than presenting evidence to undergird it.
- The process being used seems efficient, but it could be more robust. The survey catches a wide swath of students, and it is conducted independent of the actual courses which gives it a bit more credibility, but it should be expanded to allow for a more accurate measure. The survey questions were straight-forward and not really the kind of higher-order thinking we expect the core to impart.
- Primary source identification could be broadly applied as an LO to many classes outside of HT.
- The assessment method (survey) is so different from the others—makes it hard to compare results.

### ***Literary Traditions (LT)***

- A group of faculty and graduate students evaluated 40 randomly selected student work samples (out of 204) from 10 out of 40 LT sections. They held a training and norming session first. The committee chair reviewed discrepant evaluations.
- Prior to the start of the semester, faculty teaching LT courses were reminded that they needed to include an assignment that could yield student work for collection.
- The reporters assert that **at least 80% of students met the outcomes and optimistically, it may be as much as 97.8%**. However, the report did not include descriptions regarding how evaluators were judging whether outcomes were met or not. They seem to have only checked boxes that said that outcomes were met or not. Additionally, in some

cases, there were no subject matter experts assessing the work. While external assessors offer something different and positive, it seems there should be at least one expert in the field also offering feedback.

- The 10/40 sampling seems fine for a snapshot, but there is a concern that large numbers of students may, conceivably, not be meeting the LO? A rotation of all classes (if this is indeed not already being done) would improve the assessment methodology there.

### ***Cultural Awareness (CA)\****

- Faculty examination of a representative sample of assignments indicated that 89.5% met LO #1, 98.9% met LO #2, and 95.7% met LO #3 at the “satisfactory” or “mastery level” on a rubric.
- Students in upper-level courses showed a greater level of mastery.
- The committee asked instructors to send an example of an assignment that assesses a LO. Seventy-one percent (61/86) responded to the committee request to provide a sample assignment.
- The committee then selected a representative sample of courses and asked the faculty to assess the extent to which students met the LO based on one assignment (e.g., paper, exam, etc.). The faculty used a rubric to determine achievement (mastered, satisfactory and unsatisfactory)
- On the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (IES), 29% of students increased their score on “positive regard” (which includes empathy and thus relates to cultural awareness) from pre-test (first year) to post-test (senior year) by one point.

### ***Global Awareness (GA)\****

- Faculty examination of a representative sample of assignments indicate that 95% met LO #1 and 92% met LO #2 at the “satisfactory” or “mastery level.”
- Students in upper-level courses showed a greater level of mastery.
- The committee asked instructors to send an example of an assignment that assesses a LO. Seventy-one percent (30/42) responded to the committee request to provide a sample assignment.
- The committee then selected a representative sample of courses and asked the faculty to assess the extent to which students met the LO based on one assignment (e.g., paper, exam, etc.). The faculty used a rubric to determine achievement (mastered, satisfactory and unsatisfactory)
- On the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (IES), 31% of students increased their score on “world orientation” from pre-test (first year) to post-test (senior year) (which relates to global awareness) by one point.

\*CA and GA assessment occurred together during the 2020 spring semester, so was adversely impacted by pandemic. The committee planned to examine a sample of student assignments but was unable to actually do so due to the pandemic situation. Instead, the committee assessed overall results of the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (IES) which was part of the Discovering Global Citizenship Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). While students in the particular courses under examination were not asked to take the IES (due to the pandemic), the committee looked at pre- (first year students) and post-test (seniors) scores. Their data were ambiguous. The differences in scores



were minimal and t-tests were not statistically significant. However, scores for 8 of the 9 dimensions increased slightly (with differences ranging from .01 to +.28).

### ***Citizenship and Social Values (CSV)***

- Faculty examination of a representative sample of assignments indicate that 90.9% met LO #1, 93.3% met LO #2, and 96.3% met LO #3 at the “satisfactory” or “mastery level” on the rubric.
- The committee used a similar method to CA/GA. Faculty assessed their own assignments using a rubric provided by the committee.
- All 61 instructors provided sample assignments, and then the committee requested that a representative sample of faculty (n=22) use the rubric to assess an assignment. All 22 faculty complied with this request.

### **Assessment Trends**

- LT, CA, GA, and CSV provided a quantitative assessment (an overall percentage of students meeting the LOs) which is very helpful for summarizing and comparing the effectiveness of various components of the Core Curriculum. RT and HT did provide qualitative assessments, but not quantitative data as to the percentage of students who met the LOs.
- The CA, GA, and CSV evaluations included faculty assessment of sample student work from their own classes, using a rubric that reflected the LOs. In contrast, the RT and LT teams actually read selected student work samples (rather than the faculty teaching the courses doing so). LT had a training/norming session and discrepancies were reviewed by the committee chair.
- The HT committee’s use of a survey rather than student work samples was an efficient and unique way of assessing a LO but could be more robust. A survey could serve as a “check and balance” to direct assessment of student work samples.
- Having instructors vet their own students’ work products saves time and energy, as they have already graded them. This seems to be a good practice, as instructors have an embedded understanding of the student work and the goals. However, an independent assessment of at least a small subset of the student work products (or other measure) would provide a “check and balance.”
- Use of rubrics (as was done in CA, GA, and CSV) was an effective strategy and would make the assessment more efficient and uniform for instructors vetting their student work in all HMMV categories. Instructors could benefit from more guidance about the rubric criteria to increase common understanding and consistent application of the criteria.
- The reports lack detail regarding the types of student work products (e.g., paper, exam or other appropriate exercise) that were submitted for the assessment. It could be useful to have sub-categories showing the level of achievement for differing student work products.
- Some reports included recommendations. The RT committee even followed their recommendation though a conversation at a department meeting. Assessment should

not only determine if students are meeting objectives, but should also be actionable (i.e., result in changes to instruction, etc.)

**Recommendations**

- Communicating results via both quantitative (e.g., overall percentages of students meeting the LO) and qualitative measures (e.g., trends across types of work samples) will make comparisons and reporting more straight-forward.
- The assessment methods should be practical, efficient, and sustainable. For example, faculty could evaluate selected student work samples using a rubric, with a “check and balance” of another form of assessment, such as a survey of students across courses, or an independent assessment of a small portion of student work samples by a committee.
- A consistent and uniform assessment framework (e.g., faculty assessment of student work samples, certain types of exam questions) should be used across courses and across Core Curriculum areas. For example, a couple of agreed-upon exam questions/assignments that target the learning outcomes very specifically could be given in all sections of the same course.
- The Core Director and faculty could create standard rubrics that assess each LO. The rubrics do not need to be used by individual faculty for grading. They would be used after all the grading is done as an overlay, solely assessing whether the LOs were met (and excluding things like grammar/sentence structure that may also contribute to grades). Here is **sample rubric**:

“Students will demonstrate knowledge of one or more major religious traditions through the critical study of some foundational texts, figures, artifacts, ideas or practices.”			
Category	Exceeds	Meets	Does not meet
Knowledge	Student describes/explains at least one religious tradition in a way that incorporates accurate details about that tradition.	Student describes/explains at least one religious tradition but either does not incorporate detail or refers to some details that are inaccurate.	Student describes/explains at least one religious tradition in a way that is very general and rehearses stereotypical understandings.
Critical study	Student reflects on the implications of salient aspects of at least one foundational text/figure/artifact/idea/practice. Student deduces and interprets with accuracy.	Student repeats salient aspects of at least one foundational text/figure/artifact/idea/practice and makes an effort to trace their implications. Deductions/interpretations are inhibited by	Student repeats aspects of at least one foundational text/figure/artifact/idea/practice but does not do so accurately and falls prey to commonplaces rather than demonstrating personal engagement.

		pre-knowledge in a way that distorts some aspects of the text/figure/artifact/idea/practice.	
Foundational texts	Student references at least 3 foundational text/figure/artifact/idea/practice.	Student references at least 2 foundational text/figure/artifact/idea/practice.	Student references only 1 foundational text/figure/artifact/idea/practice.

- Perhaps not all required courses need to be associated with LOs. Some could just be distribution requirements. The skill-based LOs (like HT) seem easier to assess than the ones that appear to be more like distribution requirements (like RT, LT).
- **There should be a process for using the assessments results.** For example, if students in particular sections of a class are not achieving the outcomes, there should some intervention with the instructors of those classes. If the data allows us to identify some place where the process is breaking down, then it would be good to try to fix the process at that point.

### Summary of HEE Assessment Reports

#### Trends in student learning outcomes

Overall, the reports conclude that the majority students are meeting the Learning Outcomes (LOs), except for Fine Arts which did not submit an assessment report. SSC and HUM both provided top-level quantitative results (an overall percent of LOs met). This information was added to the NSC report by a Core Curriculum Committee member. Hum and NSC provided detailed breakdown of the quantitative results. Variation in what is reported makes it difficult to summarize results. Variations in assessment methods make comparisons difficult. Below is a summary of each assessment report, followed by a list of observations, questions and recommendations.

#### ***Social Sciences (SSC)***

##### **Assessment Process:**

There were 74 SSC classes were offered in the fall 2018 semester that were candidates for evaluation. The assessment process included soliciting examples of assignments fulfilling the SSC learning outcome and surveying all full-time faculty teaching a SSC class regarding student performance based on a simple rubric created by the committee.

Faculty reported results: the number of students meeting, exceeding, or not meeting the SSC outcome, via a Qualtrics survey. All faculty teaching an SSC class ultimately responded to the email, though not all completed the assessment.

### **Assessment Results:**

Faculty submitted data for 39 classes vetted for the SSC requirement (52.7% of SSC classes); a total of 1570 students are represented in the data for those classes. Of those students, faculty determined that 167 students (11% of the total) did not meet the SSC outcome, while 836 (53%) met the outcome, and 567 (36%) exceeded the outcome. Faculty report that almost 90% of students either meet or exceed the outcome.

### **Conclusions:**

The committee received a better than 50% response rate in terms of classes taught in its assessment of the SSC requirement. The data collected suggests that the SSC outcome is being met by the vast majority of students.

- The committee states that the data collected suggests that the SSC outcome is being met by the vast majority of students. No professor answering the initial email requested that his or her class be removed from SSC consideration.
- SSC Committee did not follow the same methodology as had been used in the previous Core assessment cycle.
- SSC Committee did not look at samples of student work, but simply relied on self-reporting by instructors. Committee did, however, report retaining examples of the assignments used and sample student work.
  - Second level assessment seems to be advisable—with primary assessment conducted by instructors, but with sample of student work also assessed by the Assessment Committee
- Per course percentages on student work that Exceeds/Meets/Does Not Meet is missing
- Noted problem with the reported and evaluated data—1515 students v. 1570 students (55 student discrepancy between those faculty reported having assessed v. number of student results)
- There were no recommendations provided as a result of the review/data collected
- Question that only about 11% of students sampled not meeting the SSC outcome. Is this a realistic number that signals a robust standard? Is this acceptable to SACS?
- We need to engage a “continuous improvement plan”.
- Important to establish targets/benchmarks (best practice/standards?) for each learning outcome being assessed with rationale

### ***Humanities (HUM)***

#### **Assessment Process:**

They used same procedures as SSC Committee, laying the primary responsibility for the assessment process with the individual faculty members teaching HUM Core courses. There were 85 HUM classes offered in the spring 2020 semester that were candidates for evaluation. The assessment process included surveying all full-time faculty teaching one of these courses regarding student performance on an assignment that each instructor chose to assess attainment of the Core Competency in the Humanities: "TCU graduates will apply methods of humanistic inquiry and construct relevant arguments." The score was based on a simple rubric created by the committee. Instructors were also asked to submit five examples of student work from each of their HUM classes, to show how they applied the rubric. A sample of 18% of those examples were examined by HUM Assessment Committee members to confirm the results.

### **Assessment Results/Conclusions:**

Instructors of 62 courses completed the assessment, for a response rate of 73%--given the COVID-19 interrupted semester, a very good rate of response. Of the 1,907 student assignments examined, 9.1% did not meet expectations, 54.0% met expectations, and 36.9% exceeded expectations. Thus, fully 90.9% of the assignments demonstrated successful fulfillment of the HUM Core Competency.

- Good report with specific percentages of Exceeds/Meets/Does not meet indicated at a per course level in an Appendix
- A second level independent assessment of a subset of submitted work was done by committee members.
- Question about the committee's findings as they reviewed the sample work (5 samples from each HUM course). The report suggests that the sample student work provided to the HUM Assessment committee confirmed the course/instructor level results. However, we don't see a clear indication of basis for this assessment.
- David Grant (head of HUM Assessment Committee) confirmed that he has in a Box file format all of the student sample work informing the report data for the 62 courses whose instructors responded.
- There were no recommendations provided as a result of the review/data collected.

### ***Natural Sciences (NSC)***

#### **Assessment Process:**

NSC courses were assessed during the fall 2016 semester. Typically, 14-16 NSC courses are taught in the fall, most with multiple sections. Ten of these courses were selected for assessment. The courses were at the 10000, 20000 and 30000 level. The assessment process involved giving an exam at the beginning of the semester before any material had been covered and given the same exam again at the end of the semester. The questions on the exam were structured to assess how well the three NSC Student SSC learning outcomes were being met.

#### **Assessment Results:**

Faculty submitted data for the ten classes selected for evaluation of how well course are preparing students to achieve the outcomes for the NSC requirement. More than 950 students are represented in the data from those classes. NSC courses must evaluate all 3 SLO's.

**Learning Outcome 1:**

*Students will demonstrate a basic understanding of some of the methods of investigation in the natural sciences.*

*Ave pre-test score: 39.8*

*Ave post-test score: 70.0*

*Ave change in score: 30.2*

*Ave % change in score: 45.6*

**Learning Outcome 2:**

*Students will demonstrate a basic understanding of some of the great ideas in the natural sciences.*

*Ave pre-test score: 42.6*

*Ave post-test score: 69.80*

*Ave change in score: 27.2*

*Ave % change in score: 40.2*

**Learning Outcome 3:**

*Students will demonstrate a basic understanding of some of the relationships among the natural sciences, technology, and society.*

*Ave pre-test score: 39.6*

*Ave post-test score: 71.0*

*Ave change in score: 31.5*

*Ave % change in score: 45.7*

**Conclusions:**

The data collected demonstrates that the majority of students improved their ability to meet the NSC outcomes over the course of the semester.

- The reporters for the various courses asserted that the data collected demonstrates that the majority of students improved their ability to meet the NSC outcomes over the course of the semester.
- Strong sampling of courses (introductory & upper level across several departments) with a consistent methodology of evaluating Learning Outcomes with objective pre- and post-tests
- Most individual course submissions added observations and/or recommendations based the test results collected at the course level. However, most of these dealt with the exam itself and not with how to improve help students achieve the Learning Outcomes.
- NSC Review Committee presented their findings in a different format from other reviews.

- NSC report did not contain a summary of overall result. This is a very useful page to aid in doing over-all reviews. A member of the Core Review committee prepared a summary page.
- There were no overall observations and/or recommendations based the test results collected across all NSC courses.

### ***Fine Arts (FAR)***

- No assessment was done.

### **Observations/Questions/Recommendations**

- Ask assessment people for recommendations of a good percentage of students/student work to review for different levels of assessment.
- In some cases, primary assessment conducted by instructors is sufficient in non-subjective evaluations. However, in more subjective evaluation scenarios, a sample of student work should also be assessed by qualified people who are not the instructors of the courses.
- It is important to establish targets/benchmarks (best practice/standards) for each learning outcome being assessed with a supplied rationale.
- Good idea for the future: Develop and make available a report template to provide consistency across all HEE components:
  - Learning Outcomes assessed
  - Methodology utilized
  - LO/SAS Rubrics provided
  - % of classes represented in the report
  - % of students sampled
  - Observations (regarding trends in LO/SAS effectiveness and ineffectiveness, areas that need strengthening, ways of improving the assessment process to yield clearer information, for ex.)
  - Recommended next steps for continued improvement
- Do we need as many NSC, HUM, NSC and FA classes as we have? Can we afford to winnow, or is our number at the appropriate amount?
- Should FAR be combined with HUM instead of having a separate FAR category? Should it be Humanities and Fine Arts or Fine Arts and Humanities?

## Summary of EC Assessment Reports

The Committee examined assessment data based on faculty surveys, anecdotal evidence, and student work products. According to the various assessment reports, students generally met written communication, math, and oral communication learning outcomes (LOs). The group spent quite some time discussing the writing portions of the Core in their search for opportunities for improvement.

Writing Emphasis (WEM). The only measure used for assessment was a survey of faculty impressions rather than directly assessing student learning. The survey reveals that only 33% of WEM faculty feel they have adequate information to conduct these courses. The group noted that gauging the effectiveness of this component of the Core is more difficult due to the large number of WEM courses offered by TCU and the different teaching strategies throughout the university. It would be helpful to evaluate actual student work products. Otherwise, it is unclear how well students are achieving the WEM LOs.

Written Communication (WCO). The group examined several measures of student learning outcomes, including focus groups, surveys of students and instructors, the National Survey of Student Engagement writing survey, and samples from student portfolios that independent faculty experts graded. Based on these data, large percentages of students are classified as "weak" on some LOs. For instance, WCO 2 has 4 LOs; one of the measures had faculty experts grade student portfolios, and the average scores for students in 3 of the 4 LOs placed them in the "weak" category. For WCO 1, 1 of 3 LOs had most portfolio samples fall in the "weak" category.

We address possible changes to the Core below, which would present a significant challenge for TCU to implement, and we offer them only for consideration.

First, we note that a more consistent approach to the Core assessment is necessary. Several committee members commented that current assessment data were limited. For example, faculty conducted only one assessment during the review period in many areas. The lack of time-series data makes it impossible to determine whether performance changed over time. It also leaves the assessments without a useful benchmark. Furthermore, it shows a lack of "closing-the-loop" assessment, making changes, and reassessing.

Standardizing assessment methods may also be desirable, at least within different Core areas. The HMMV categories (Cultural Awareness, Historical Traditions, etc.), for example, are all assessed very differently. The assessments should be conducted regularly (at least every other year) and in similar formats to ensure comparability. It is also essential to document what changes are implemented in response to the assessment results and assess the effects of the changes on performance. To keep assessment manageable, it should be parsimonious by focusing on a small number (preferably about three) of key items. Some of the changes may achieve this suggested below, which generally lean towards simplifying the Core requirements and reducing the number of learning outcomes, perhaps by consolidating or eliminating duplicates.

Many committee members agree that the core is too cumbersome as it currently exists. For instance, the HMMV group pointed to the overlap between the HMMV and HEE as an



opportunity to streamline the Core requirement. One suggestion included bolstering the EC requirements and restructuring the HEE and HMOV by simplifying the requirements or consolidating much of HMOV and HEE, or both. The EC group spent much time discussing potential changes to the writing portions of the Core, which treat skills that all members agreed are essential.

The Writing Emphasis (WEM) and Written Communication (WCO) portions of the Core need an update. As an example, although WEM has a two-course requirement, some departments only offer one WEM course. Consequently, students often must satisfy the prerequisites for WEM classes offered by other departments. It might be desirable to allow departments more flexibility, deciding how to teach their major's discipline-specific writing skills outside of a Core requirement. While good writing skills are important in nearly all majors, faculty in many non-writing-focused disciplines frequently lack the necessary skills, training, and motivation to teach writing. One possible solution could be to give majors the option of replacing writing-emphasis courses with one discipline-specific writing course that focuses entirely on writing. Further, continued enrollment pressure has forced some departments to offer WEM courses of 50 students or more, thereby reducing their effectiveness. We note that there are numerous student learning outcomes in these portions of the core: 7 in WCO and 4 in WEM. Reducing this number may be desirable for many reasons, including simplifying assessment.

Finally, several committee members asked whether higher standards are needed to improve the TCU Core further. For example, some committee members suggested that universities with global ambitions in their mission statement should require all students to complete a foreign language.

### Mathematical Reasoning Program Review, 2015-2016

Prepared by Susan Staples, July 2015

**Background and Overview of Report:** In the summer of 2008, Susan Staples and Kristi Rittby attended an assessment workshop offered by TCU. Together they formed the Core Assessment Committee for Mathematics and devised the original 2008 Mathematical Reasoning Core Assessment plan. From 2008 to 2013, assessment proceeded as outlined in the 2008 document and annual assessment reports were filed in the WEAVE online assessment system.

After completing the six-year cycle of the original assessment plan, Susan Staples examined and modified the assessment plan. The new assessment plan and timeline commenced in 2015.

### **2015 Mathematical Reasoning Core Assessment Plan**

**Remarks:** The 2008 plan was modified in two ways. First of all, we realized when collecting data on Math 20524 that very few, if any, students use this class to satisfy their core requirement because the course prerequisite, Math 10524, is also a core class. Therefore, we no longer feel it is necessary to assess Math 20524 as a core class. Also, because the data collection became unmanageable with handling so many sections of two different courses in a semester, we have redesigned the assessment to focus on one core class at a time. Data is collected only one term per year, also.

The current Core Assessment Committee for Mathematics consists of Susan Staples and Allison Owen.

### **Timeline**

Data will be collected in the courses offered in either the Spring and Fall terms of each academic year following the 8-year cycle outlined above.

At the end of each year, the data collected from the embedded test items will be shared with the faculty course team. Recommendations for improvements the course will be forwarded to the department from this team.

Note: Academic Year 2015-2016 is Year 1

Beginning Fall 2015:

Year 1 – Year 2:        MATH 10283

Year 3 – Year 4:        MATH 10033

Year 5 – Year 6:        MATH 10043

Year 7 – Year 8:        MATH 10524

### **Specific Measures for Outcomes**

For each course, a member of the Mathematical Reasoning Core Assessment Committee will coordinate implementation of the following measures.

#### Direct Measure

EMBEDDED TEST ITEMS – Archetypes of 2 or 3 common exam problems to be included in final exams for all sections of the course. These problems should require that the students apply mathematical reasoning to solve them. The Mathematical Reasoning Core Assessment Committee will provide a quality assessment rubric to each instructor.

#### Indirect Measure:

STUDENT SURVEY– There will be a pre-course and post-course survey for 2 or 3 sections of the course in the academic year. This survey will focus on students' confidence in their ability to reason mathematically. Surveys will be related to the type of mathematical reasoning presented in each specific course.

FACULTY FEEDBACK –Once per year, assessment results and any recommendations for improvements of the course will be shared with the department at large.

## Who is Responsible?

The classroom instructors of these courses will be required to collect the requested data. The Mathematical Reasoning Core Assessment Committee will analyze the accumulated data and share the findings with the department. Currently Susan Staples and Allison Owen serve on the Core Assessment Committee.

## Summary of Assessment Results: 2015

In the fall semester of 2015, Math 10283 pre and post course student surveys were taken. Target goals for the post course student survey responses were set for at least 80% of students expressing confidence at the “somewhat” or “yes” level of understanding. In fact, over 95% of the students felt confident they had met these curricular goals.

Furthermore, we again analyzed embedded test items in course final exams to see if students could effectively solve typical types of problems. Target goals for the problem solving abilities were set for at least 70% of students succeeding at the “somewhat” or “yes” level of understanding. Success rates ranged from 78% to 95% for the various problem types.

A more detailed report of the assessment results appears in the WEAVE assessment report for 2015-2016.

## Looking Forward

We will continue to utilize both the student surveys and embedded test items as measures to assess the core classes. We also will consider some new measures of core classes. As courses in general are now including more group work and collaborative learning, some sections of our core classes are adopting these new methods. Therefore, we are looking into means of determining if the new techniques are effective in meeting our Mathematical Reasoning Core Outcomes.

## **OCO Assessment Report for COMM 10123** (Spring 2020)

### **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

**NCA/Dept. Learning Outcome:** #6 Demonstrate the ability to accomplish communicative goals (Perform verbal and nonverbal communication behaviors to illustrate self-efficacy).

**OCO EC Learning Outcome:** Students will demonstrate the ability to construct and deliver effective messages, adapted to the audience, purpose, and context

**COMM 10123 Learning Outcome:** Construct messages by supporting claims, organizing ideas, and adapting to the audience

**Specific Objective:** Students will cite credible sources to support their claims during their persuasive presentation.

### ACHIEVEMENT TARGET

- At least 75% of students consistently (3) orally cited sources
- At least 75% of students consistently (3) clearly communicated the credibility of the sources
- At least 75% of students consistently (3) integrated sources effectively into speech
- The average total score for each student was > 5

### MEASUREMENT

This data represents a sample (130 students) enrolled in one of the sections of COMM 10123. We evaluated students' construction and incorporation of oral citations during their persuasive presentations. A separate rubric was used for data collection (Note: this rubric was not associated with students' speech grades).

### RESULTS ANALYSIS

On average, students averaged a total score of a 7.7, which well-exceeded our anticipated achievement target. Overall students demonstrated that they know how to orally cite their sources (77% consistently cited their sources) which was our primary learning outcome. However, they struggled the most with clearly communicating the credibility of these sources (48% consistently communicated the credibility of their sources in a clear manner). Interestingly, more students (64%) demonstrated that they are able to effectively integrate their sources into their speech.

While students did not meet all four targets, these results reflect the amount of instruction received in each of these three categories. In our current curriculum, we strongly emphasized the importance of orally giving credit to the source of the supporting material used in a speech. In contrast, while we also spent a fair amount of time teaching students how to select credible support, we did not provide as much instruction about how to clearly communicate this credibility in an oral citation. This is also the case in regards to the integration of oral citations. These two criteria reflect more advanced aspects of oral citation, and, thus, are more difficult for students to execute during their speech. Regardless, the results from this assessment confirm that we should place more emphasis on these two aspects (i.e. clear communication of credibility and effective integration) in future semesters. Development of this skill may require a scaffolded approach (e.g. step 1: orally cite sources, step 2: clearly communicate the credibility, and step 3: effectively integrate these complete citations into a speech) where each aspect is emphasized individually, rather than assumed. In sum, this assessment has produced valuable insights that will inform our decision-making moving forward. Additionally, the process of creating this assessment measure resulted in meaningful reflection and more clear articulation of these important course concepts.

## OCO Assessment Report for COMM 10123 (Fall 2020)

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

**NCA/Dept. Learning Outcome:** #6 Demonstrate the ability to accomplish communicative goals (Perform verbal and nonverbal communication behaviors to illustrate self-efficacy).

**OCO EC Learning Outcome:** Students will demonstrate the ability to construct and deliver effective messages, adapted to the audience, purpose, and context

**COMM 10123 Learning Outcome:** Construct messages by supporting claims, organizing ideas, and adapting to the audience

**Specific Objective:** Students will cite credible sources to support their claims during their persuasive presentation.

### ACHIEVEMENT TARGET

At least 80% of students will display competency (i.e., earn an A (5/5pts) or a B (4/5pts)) in regards to this aspect of their persuasive speech.

### MEASUREMENT

This data was collected from 373 students enrolled in one of the 22 large lecture/lab sections of COMM 10123. Students were evaluated on their articulation of oral citations during their persuasive speech. The data was pulled from each student's rubric – each data point represented the total number of points earned for this aspect of a student's overall speech.

### RESULTS ANALYSIS

On average, students scored a total score of a 4 out of 5 possible points for the Oral Citation aspect of their persuasive speeches. The most common score was a 5 out of 5, however, only 77% of students earned a B (i.e., 4pts) or higher.

Overall, the data showed that students *know* they should incorporate oral citations into their presentation, but they struggle with the *execution* during their speech. This conclusion is consistent with the results of our Spring 2020 assessment. In response to last semester's collection, I created an additional instructional video to explain the expectations and guidelines for oral citations. After reviewing students' individual rubrics, this additional resource appears to have helped students properly construct oral citations for their speeches. However, the video did not address how to effectively integrate an oral citation into a message. For instance, how to determine the best order in which to present the source information and the overall timing/placement of an oral citation. Of the two aspects of an oral citation – content and delivery – delivery is definitely the more complex and nuanced skill. Next semester I will incorporate at least one new activity that focuses on the *delivery* of oral citations.

## **OCO Assessment Report for COMM 10123 (Spring 2021)**

### **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

**NCA/Dept. Learning Outcome:** #4 – Create messages appropriate to the audience, purpose, and context

**OCO EC Learning Outcome:** Students will demonstrate the ability to construct and deliver effective messages, adapted to the audience, purpose, and context

**COMM 10123 Learning Outcome:** Adapt messages for the specific audience, purpose, and context

**Specific Objectives:** Students will choose appropriate topics for the specified audience and assignment and adapt the content of the message to the audience.

### **ACHIEVEMENT TARGET**

At least 80% of students will display competency (i.e., earn an A (5/5pts) or a B (4/5pts)) in regards to this aspect of their persuasive speeches

### **MEASUREMENT**

This data was collected from 431 students enrolled in one of the 23 large lecture/lab sections of COMM 10123. Students were evaluated on their choice of topic (in relation to the assignment prompt) and how they adapted the content of their speech to target a specific audience. The data was pulled from each student's rubric – each data point represented the total number of points earned for this aspect of a student's overall persuasive speech.

### **RESULTS/ANALYSIS**

On average, students earned 4.6 out of 5 possible points for the Topic & Audience aspect of their persuasive speeches. The most common score was a 5 out of 5 with 97% of students earning a B (i.e., 4pts) or higher. This outcome well-exceeded my anticipated achievement target. Overall students demonstrated that they understand how to choose an appropriate topic and have the ability to adapt their message to a specific audience, purpose, and context.

Even though students met the achievement target, there is still opportunity for improved measurement and instruction. Firstly, this category (i.e., Topic and Audience) is a new addition to the rubric. I have always evaluated these elements as part of other categories, but it wasn't until this Spring 2021 semester that I unified them as one category. This required that I train my 11 graduate teaching assistants to score this new section midway through the academic year. Therefore, it is possible that there was not a consistent understanding of how to evaluate this aspect of students' speeches. Thus, I would like to conduct the same collection next semester (Fall 2021) in solely my four sections of COMM 10123 to ensure more inter-rater reliability.

Secondly, students most frequently earned 4 out of 5 points because they did not effectively relate their topic to their audience. I would like to give more instructional time and emphasis to how to adapt a topic and message to a specific audience. This includes demonstrating behaviors such as connecting the topic to current and relevant events and addressing the audience using personal pronouns. Specifically, I plan to incorporate into the course curriculum more activities that specifically target these important skills.

## Appendix B

**Surveys:** Our committee examined the 2013-2014 review of the Core and noted the results of students, faculty, and alumni surveys. The results indicated that 87% of faculty respondents, 89% of student respondents, and 78% of alumni respondents agreed that the Core contributed substantially to meeting the university’s mission. The table below displays results for student and alumni surveys related to whether the Core addresses specific components of the mission statement.

<b>Item</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Alumni</b>
Core improved my ability to apply an ethical perspective to a variety of complex issues	75% agree	61% agree
Core increased my understanding of complex issues facing the global community	75% agree	59% agree
Core helped me become a responsible citizen/member of the global community.	75% agree	53% agree

From these findings, one can conclude that the majority of students and alumni agreed the Core helped them to fulfill the university’s mission in its first decade.

### **Likert-Scale Questions for the 2022 Student Survey on the Core**

Several questions were worded similarly to those in the student survey from 2013. However, in 2013, there were only four response choices (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree) and in 2022, there were six choices (strongly agree, agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, disagree, strongly disagree). The table shows a comparison of the percent of students agreeing with the following statements:

<b>Item</b>	<b>2022 Mean (SD)</b>	<b>2022 % Agreement</b>	<b>2013 % Agreement</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Core contributes to the TCU mission*	4.28 (1.20)	81%	89%	-8%
Understand the purpose of the core curriculum	4.24 (1.31)	76%	90%	-14%
Understand the benefits of the core curriculum	4.04 (1.28)	72%	86%	-14%
Core prepares me for academic success	3.96 (1.43)	68%	80%	-12%



Core prepares me for professional success	3.92 (1.46)	63%	74%	-11%
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*\*In 2022 we asked three new questions about whether Core course helped to prepare students for ethical leadership, responsible citizenship, and lifelong learning. About three-quarters of the respondents thought that it did.*

As shown in the above table, the agreement levels have dropped from 2013 to 2022. We should be cautious in making direct comparisons, due to minor differences in question wording and possible differences in the sample composition, etc. However, it is worth considering whether we have done something differently in the past eight years that might have led to declines. Do we do a poorer job communicating the purpose and benefits of the Core than we did previously? Has the quality of instruction decreased? Are our students different? Have their perceptions changed about what they need to be academically and professionally successful? Some of the comments on the open-ended question might provide insights into their thinking. For example, some students perceive that certain Core courses are too difficult and result in a lower GPA, while others think that the Core courses compete for their time and effort and detract from courses in their major, which they believe will lead them to professional success.

While the 2022 ratings indicate that the majority of students responded positively to the questions, we should still be concerned with those that did not agree with the statements. The most highly rated item was that the Core curriculum contributes to our mission statement, with only 19% disagreeing with the statement. Approximately one-quarter to one-third of students did not understand the purpose or benefit of the core or feel like it contributed to their academic or professional success. We can do better!

***The revision of the Core—to include a DEI-EC component—and to, perhaps revise, reduce, and/or redesign other elements could contribute to a revitalization of TCU’s general education program.***

Finally, several committee members asked whether higher standards are needed to improve the TCU Core further. For example, some committee members suggested that universities with global ambitions in their mission statement should require all students to complete a foreign language.

### **2022 Faculty Survey on the Core**

While data-informed analysis is important and has been conducted by the committee—we studied the Core assessment documents from 2014-2021 in detail as well as surveys administered in 2014 and in 2022—rethinking based on our experiences as faculty members who are active on an ongoing basis in both discipline-specific research and discussions about pedagogy in our fields brings an additional and crucial element of analysis to any attempt at re-evaluation. Data can tell us something about the past that might inform the future, but really

innovative departures often depend on the expertise and informed insights of people who regularly teach in the Core. Thus, we queried the faculty and advisory staff via a survey regarding their suggestions for updating the Core Curriculum.

### **A Brief Summary of the Faculty/Advisor Survey on the TCU Core (by Chris Sawyer)**

My goal is to explain the Faculty/Advisor Survey results in language that will make sense to most readers. Many scholars use the following standards to describe how often individuals agree when they rate the same items. The numbers in parentheses represent percentages, where 1.0 indicates 100 % agreement.

No Agreement (0.0)

Slight Agreement (.01 to .2)

Fair Agreement (.21 to .4)

Moderate Agreement (.41 to .6)

Substantial Agreement (.61 to .8)

Almost Perfect (.81 to 1.0)

I used the following steps when applying these standards. First, I summed the percentages for the responses of Somewhat Agree, Agree, and Strongly Agree on each item. Next, I adjusted this score to provide a conservative agreement estimate. Third, I ranked all survey items on that adjusted score. Fourth, I composed brief paragraphs based on the language in the survey and the descriptors above. Last, I arranged these statements from strongest levels of agreement to weakest.

#### **Strongest Agreement**

The survey respondents strongly endorsed that they understood the purpose, benefits, and requirements of the TCU Core. Further, they affirmed that the Core helps students to analyze various human experiences, contributes to the TCU Mission, and achieves the goals of a liberal education.

#### **Substantial Agreement**

Survey respondents substantially agreed that the Core curriculum helps students to understand multiple viewpoints, analyze creative and cultural expression, communicate effectively, and become socially responsible members of the global community. Likewise, they agreed that the Core prepares students for academic and professional success. Additionally, respondents believed they could advise students on their progress through the Core curriculum.

Respondents substantially agreed that the Core curriculum helps students to apply scientific and mathematical skills and concepts. The Core prepares students for responsible citizenship,

lifelong learning, ethical leadership, and applying ethical perspectives to complex issues, according to faculty and advisors.

### **Moderate & Fair Agreement**

Faculty and advisors moderately agreed that the Core helps students comprehend the dynamics of power, privilege, and difference and engage diverse communities. Further, they moderately agreed that students understand the purpose and benefits of the Core. Faculty and advisors indicated that they know how to locate information on Core curriculum learning outcomes and how to submit courses for approval. They moderately agreed that the Core curriculum adds a positive distinction to TCU compared to other universities.

Faculty and advisors somewhat agreed that both they and the students find the Core requirements confusing. Respondents also agreed somewhat that TCU provides adequate opportunities to learn about the Core. They moderately agreed that they would participate in additional faculty/advisor development.

### **Slight Agreement**

Faculty and advisors only slightly agreed that the Core curriculum requirements make it difficult for students to finish their degrees in four years.

### **Qualitative input from the 2022 Faculty Survey** (based on 238 comments)

The most frequent faculty comments addressed the **importance of DEI** and the imperative of getting it folded into the Core structure. (31 comments)

Next was the statement of the **need for clear and compelling communication** about the Core and its purpose and benefits. (21) When coupled with statements regarding the value of the liberal arts (6) and need to help students strengthen their critical thinking skills (7), faculty comments demonstrate solid support for the significance of the Core and for its aspirations.

### **Other suggestions for specific improvements to the Core included:**

#### Content-related:

More practical, life-focused courses/instruction (from financial planning to business writing to how to evaluate news) (13)

More service learning (8)

More STEM focus (Science & technology, Math skills, Sustainability emphasis) (8)

Include foreign language facility (to align with the 'global citizenship' goal) (8)

Add a health and wellness class (3)

#### Design-related:

Complaints about the Core being too confusing/complex (17)

Desire for more flexibility (17)

Desire for the Core's hours to be reduced or 'streamlined' (14)

Desire for more diversity of courses within the Core (3)

Desire for smaller classes (2)

Delivery-related:

Concern for students' relatively poor writing skills (14) and for improved support for faculty who teach WEM courses (2), as well as for Core faculty overall (4)

Desire for more full time faculty to teach Core courses and fewer Core courses to be taught by adjunct faculty (6)

Call for better advising (with improved training for advising staff and faculty advisors with respect to the Core) (5)

Call for more consistency across Core courses, esp. in different sections of the same class, and for greater rigor in Core classes (5)

Call for Core courses to be audited every few years in order to make sure they are still achieving what they were approved to achieve in the submission process, esp. when the faculty who submitted them for Core credit are no longer teaching them. (6)

Process-related:

Submission process needs to be easier and the approval process more transparent, esp. for HMVV courses (6)

Equity concern that it can be too hard for transfer students and students whose high schools did not offer many AP/IB/Dual credit courses are disadvantaged by the current Core and related transfer credit protocols. (6)

## Appendix C

### GRADUATE EXIT SURVEY MAY 2022

#### CORE CURRICULUM EVALUATION

Overall Response Rate                      1620/1997=81.1%

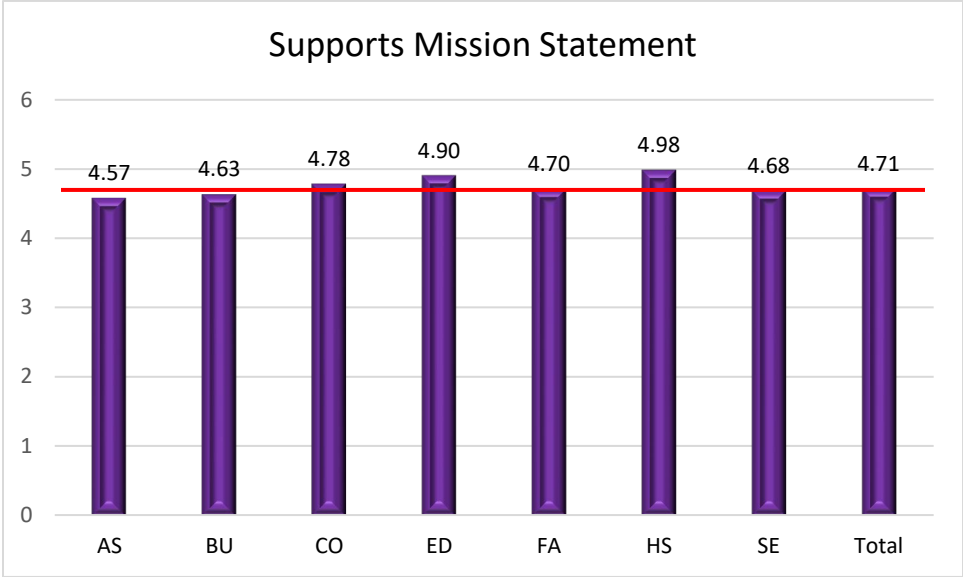
Overall Completion Rate      1601/1620=98.8%

	<u>Response Rate</u>	<u>Completion Rate</u>
AS	209/300=69.7%	206/209=98.6%
BU	491/646=76.0%	481/491=98.0%
CO	238/287=82.9%	236/238=99.2%
ED	60/67=89.6%	60/60=100.0%
FA	146/167=87.4%	144/146=98.6%
HS	173/182=95.1%	172/173=99.4%
IS	5/7=71.4%	5/5=100.0%
SE	298/341=87.4%	297/298=99.7%

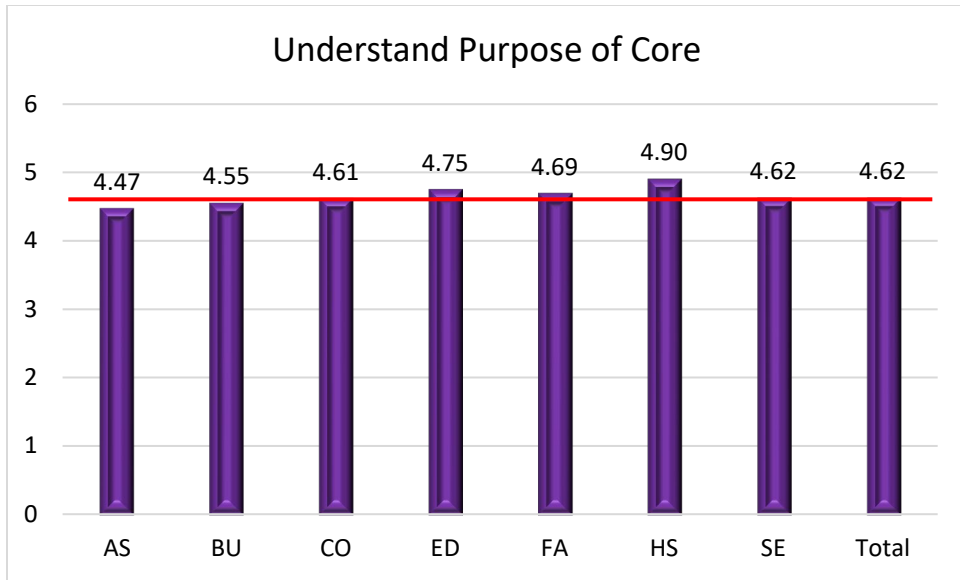
As the number of students completing the survey enrolled in the School of Interdisciplinary Studies was small, these students were combined with students from AddRan for the following analyses.

While almost all of the items displayed statistically significant differences when Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was performed on each item, using College as the grouping factor, the practical difference may not be as significant, as all Colleges scored fairly high on each of the items. That being said, the results did yield a consistent pattern with Health Sciences outscoring the other colleges on almost every positively-oriented item.

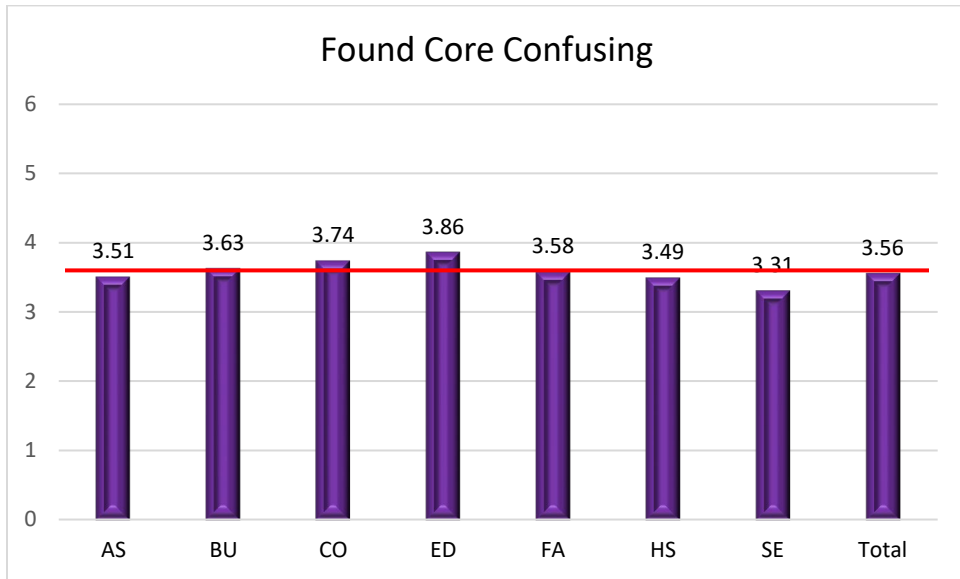
Overall, results indicated that students are having a fairly positive experience with the Core Curriculum. It was somewhat disappointing that so many students found the Core confusing and indicated that the Core made it difficult to graduate in four years. The researcher would have like to have seen both of these items under the 3-pt range.



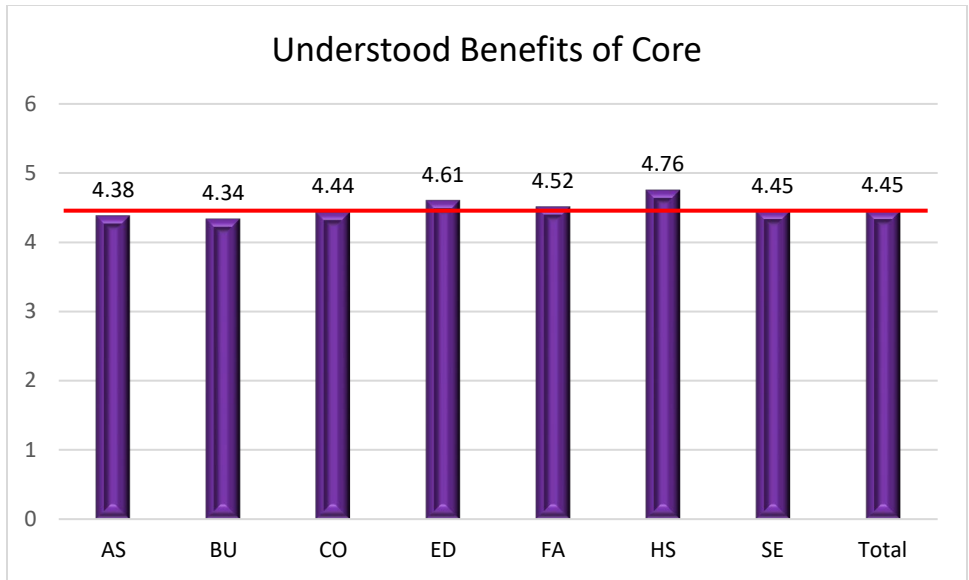
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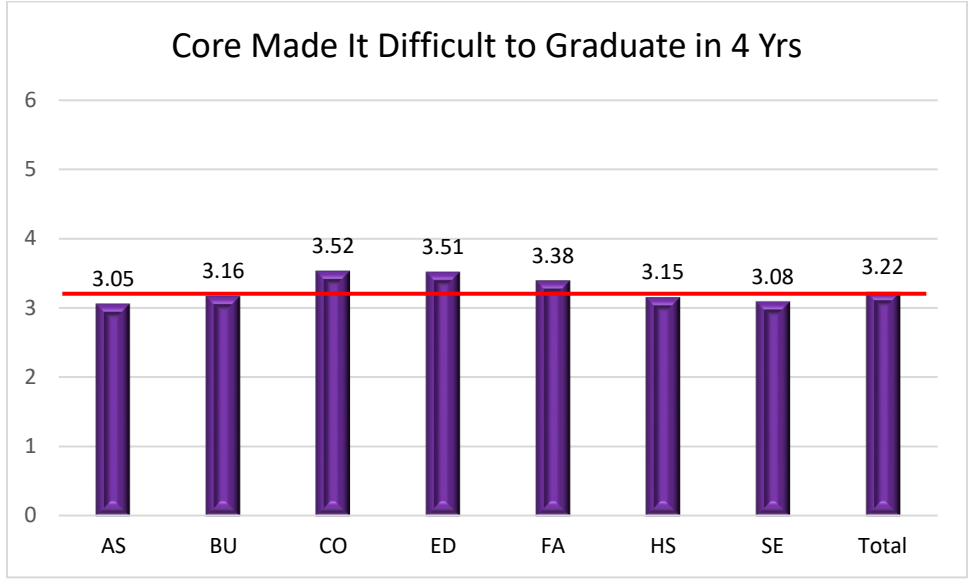
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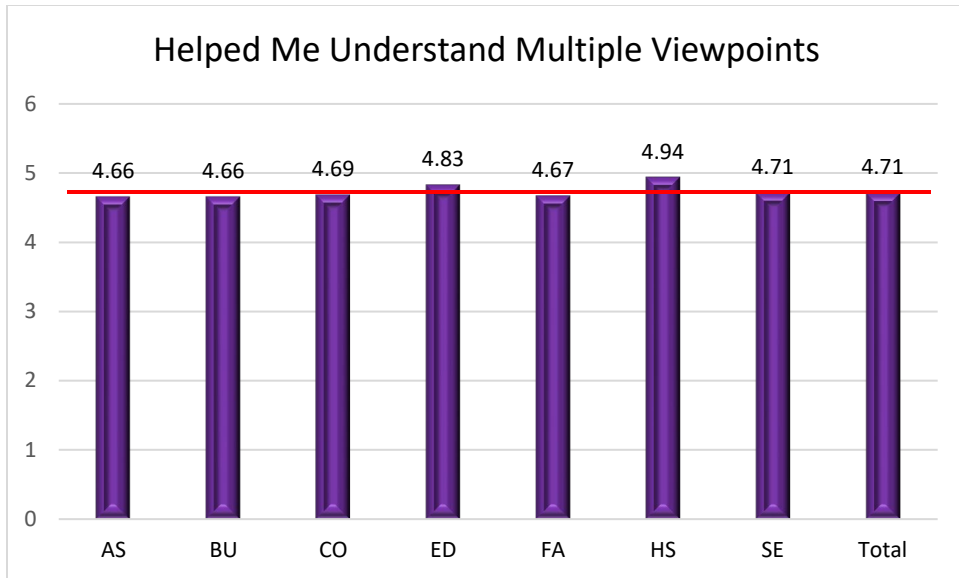


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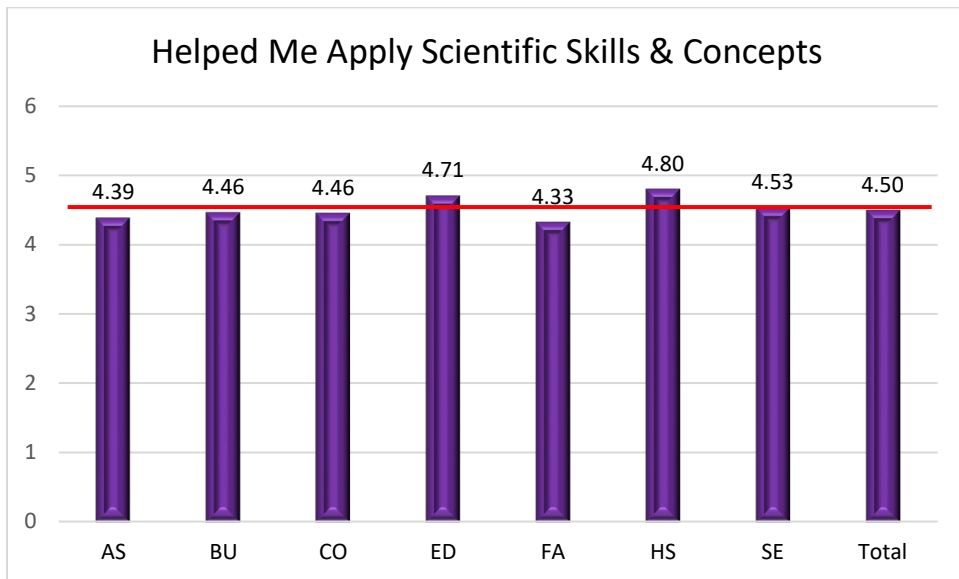


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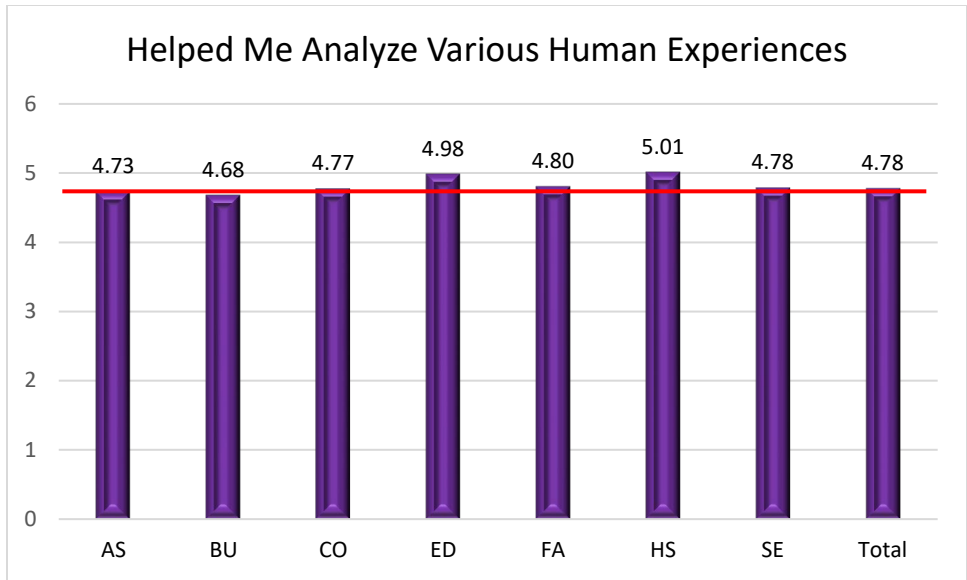




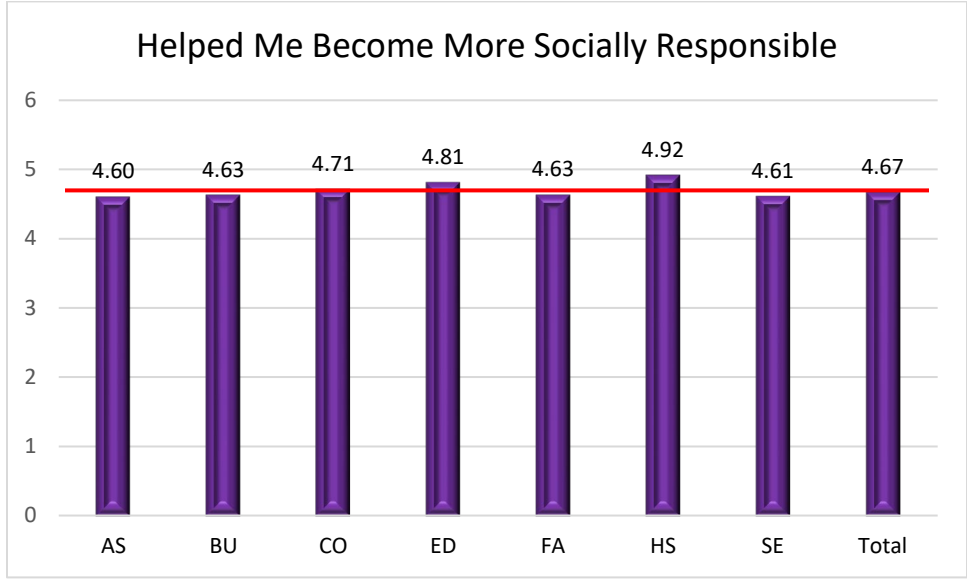
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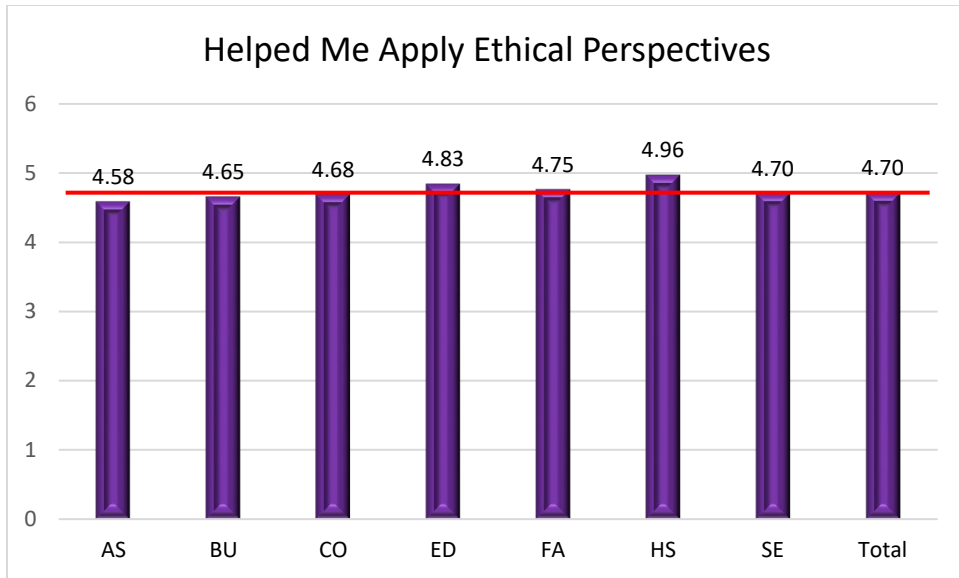
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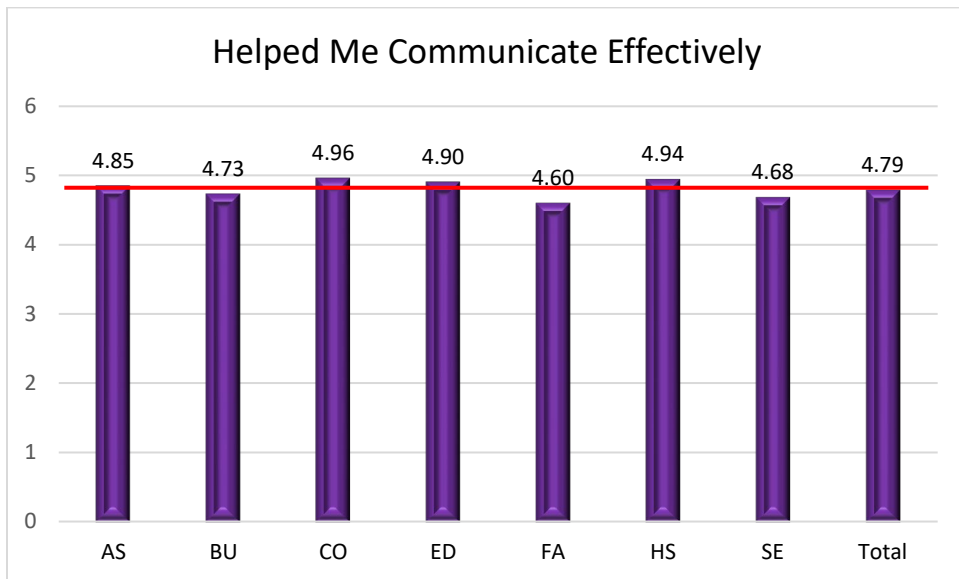
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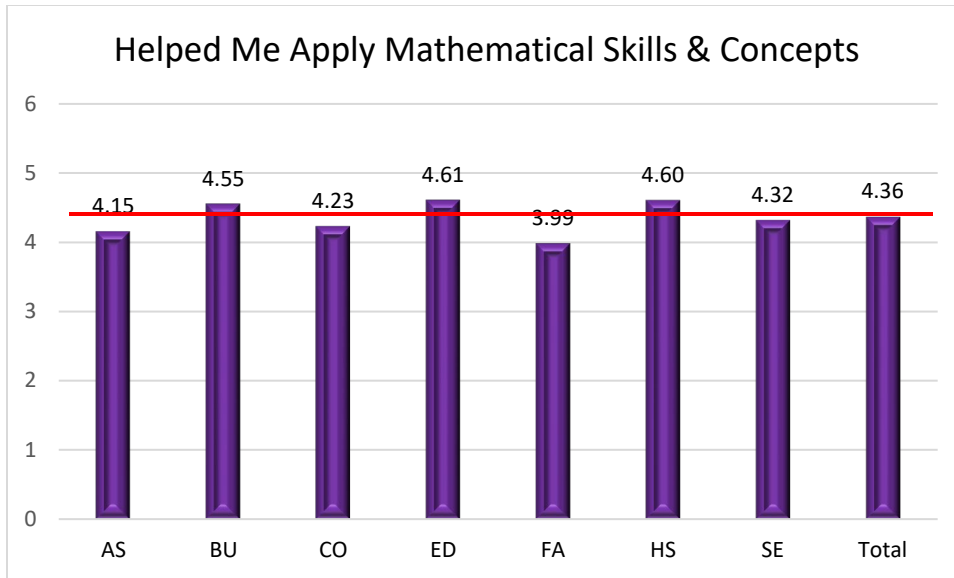
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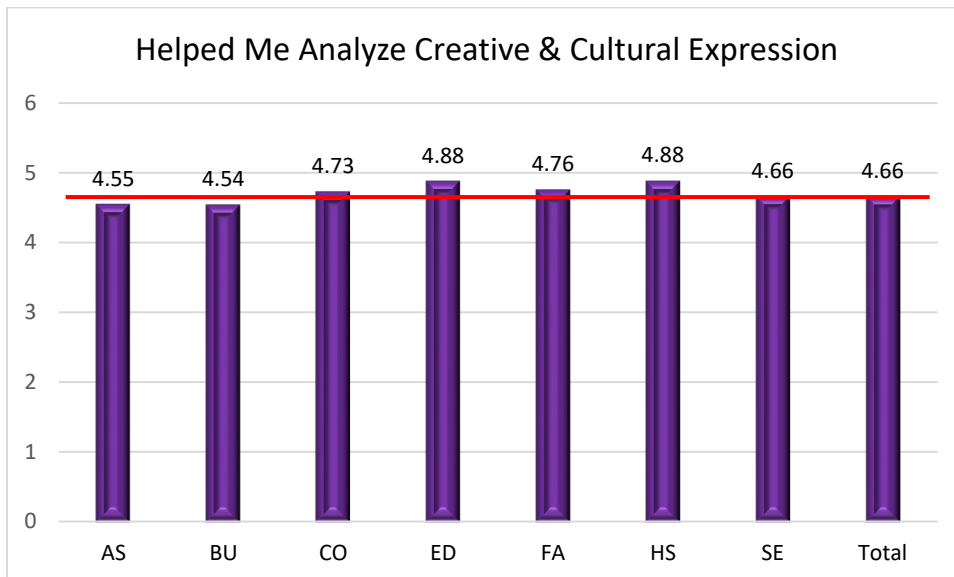
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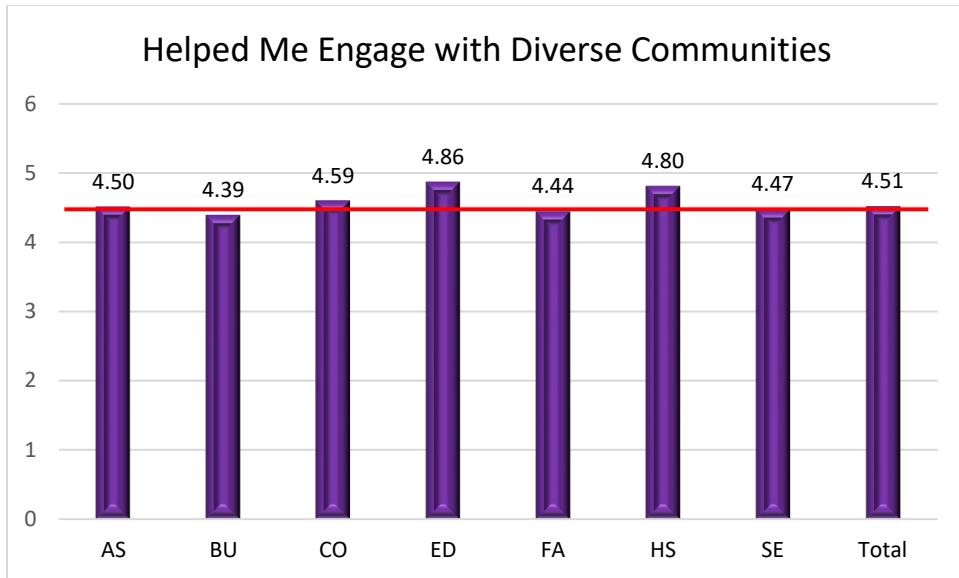
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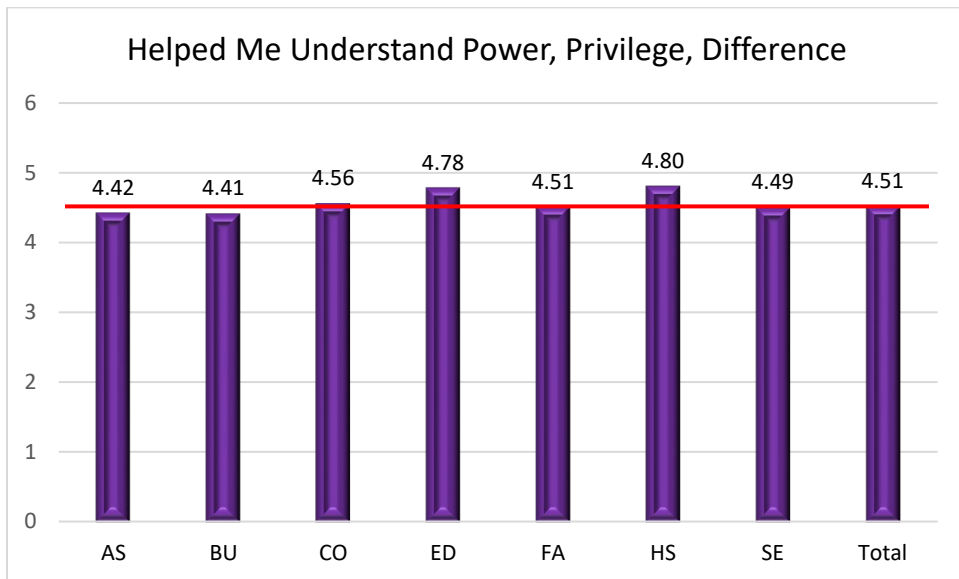
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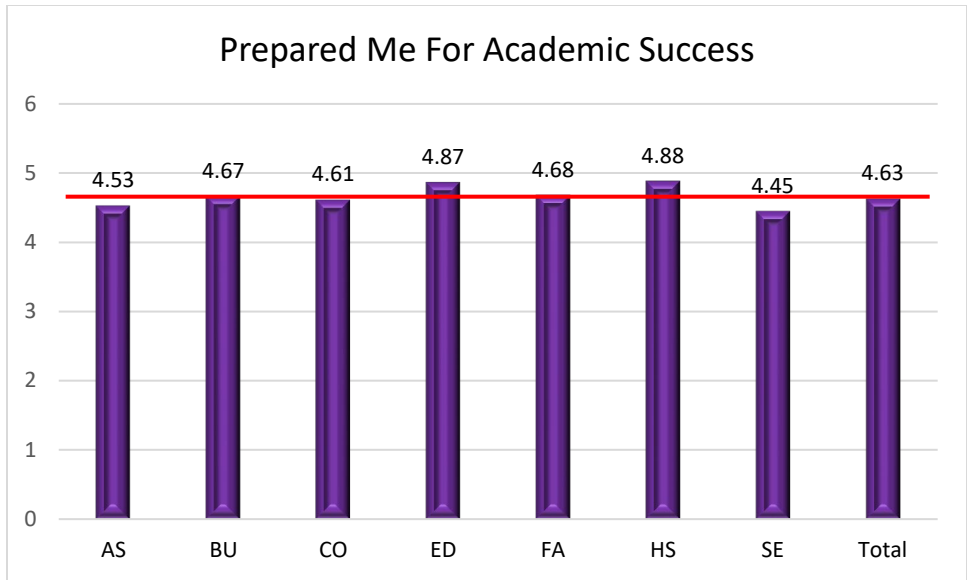
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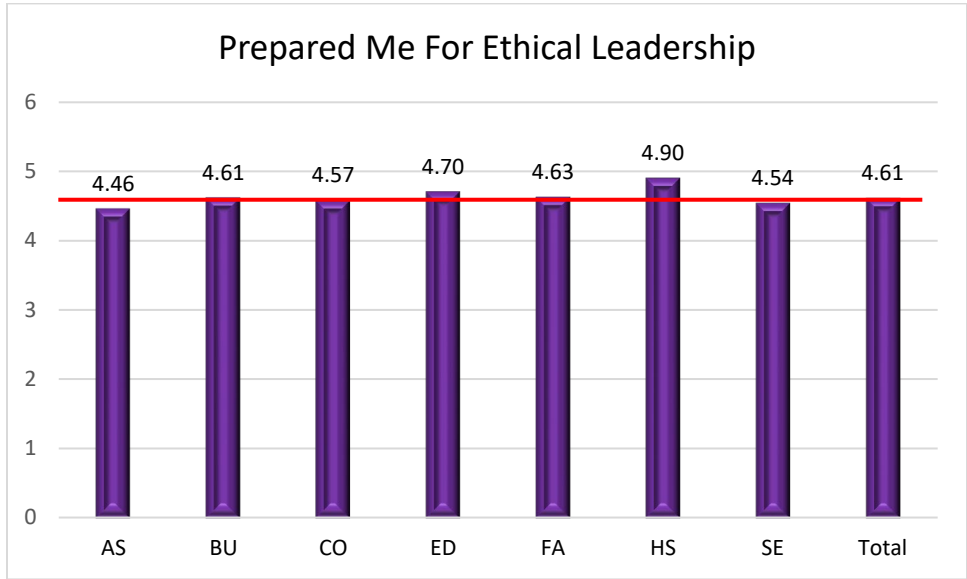
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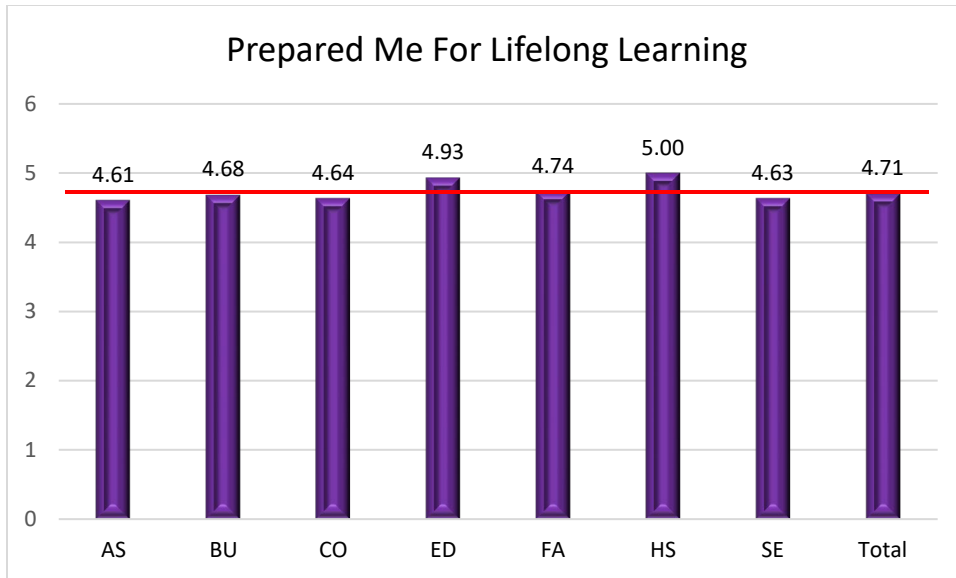
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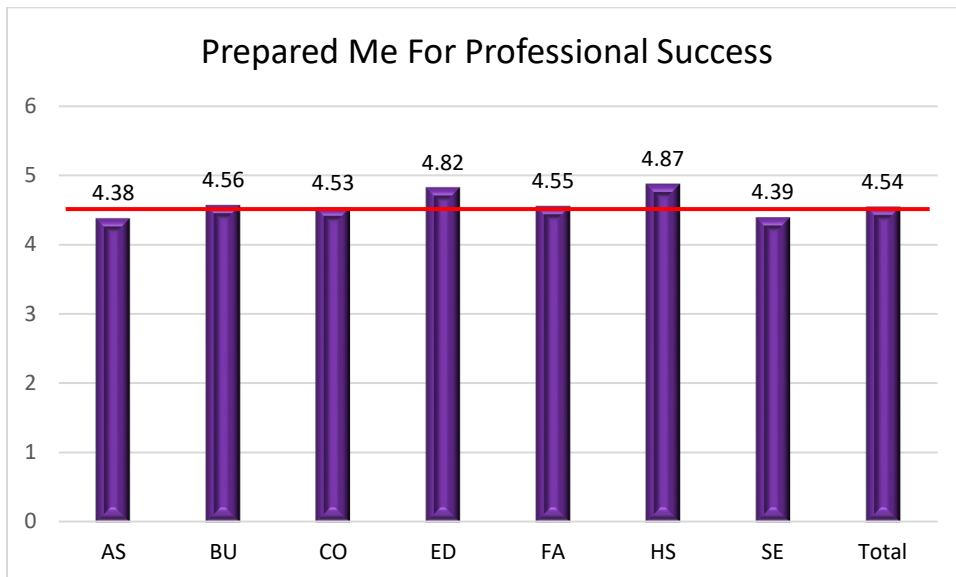
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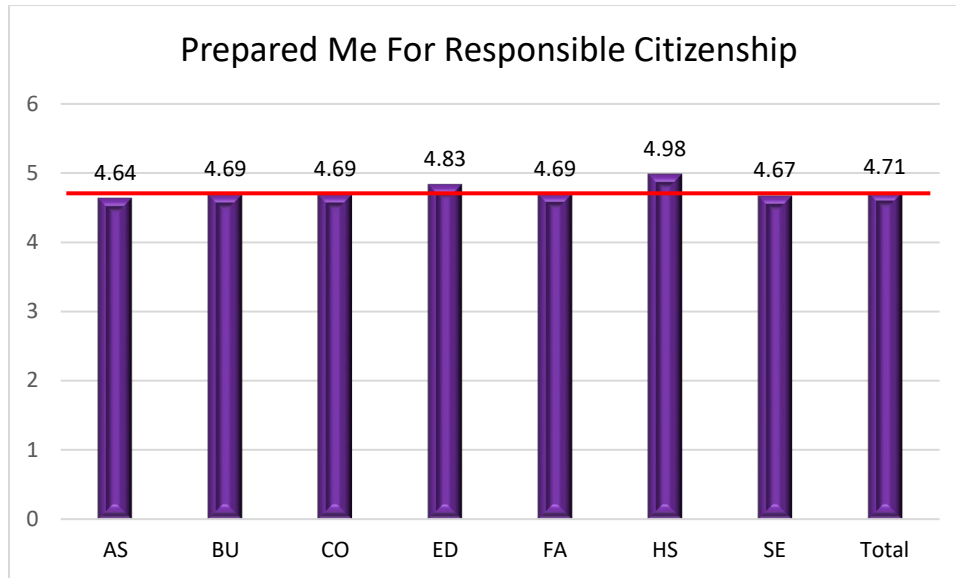
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(p=0.082)

#### Appendix D

#### **Selections from the AACU High-Impact Practices Resource Page**

The teaching and learning practices listed and described below are designated as “high-impact practices,” or HIPs, based on evidence of significant educational benefits for students who participate in them—including and especially those from demographic groups historically underserved by higher education. These practices take many different forms, depending on learner characteristics and on institutional priorities and contexts.

#### **Common Intellectual Experiences**

The older idea of a “core” curriculum has evolved into a variety of modern forms, such as a set of required common courses or a vertically organized general education program that includes advanced integrative studies and/or required participation in a learning community. These programs often combine broad themes—e.g., technology and society, global interdependence—with a variety of curricular and co-curricular options for students.

#### **Diversity/Global Learning**

Many colleges and universities now emphasize courses and programs that help students explore cultures, life experiences, and worldviews different from their own. These studies—which may address US diversity, world cultures, or both—often explore “difficult differences” such as racial, ethnic, and gender inequality, or continuing struggles around the globe for human rights, freedom, and power. Frequently, intercultural studies are augmented by experiential learning in the community and/or by study abroad.



### **First-Year Seminars and Experiences**

Many institutions now build into the curriculum first-year seminars or other programs that bring small groups of students together with faculty or staff on a regular basis. The highest-quality first-year experiences place a strong emphasis on critical inquiry, frequent writing, information literacy, collaborative learning, and other skills that develop students' intellectual and practical competencies. First-year seminars can also involve students with cutting-edge questions in scholarship and with faculty members' own research.

### **Learning Communities**

The key goals for learning communities are to encourage integration of learning across courses and to involve students with "big questions" that matter beyond the classroom. Students take two or more linked courses as a group and work closely with one another and with their professors. Many learning communities explore a common topic and/or common readings through the lenses of different disciplines. Some deliberately link "liberal arts" and "professional courses"; others feature service learning.

### **Service Learning, Community-Based Learning**

In these programs, field-based "experiential learning" with community partners is an instructional strategy—and often a required part of the course. The idea is to give students direct experience with issues they are studying in the curriculum and with ongoing efforts to analyze and solve problems in the community. A key element in these programs is the opportunity students have to both apply what they are learning in real-world settings and reflect in a classroom setting on their service experiences. These programs model the idea that giving something back to the community is an important college outcome, and that working with community partners is good preparation for citizenship, work, and life.

- **-Writing-Intensive Courses**

These courses emphasize writing at all levels of instruction and across the curriculum, including final-year projects. Students are encouraged to produce and revise various forms of writing for different audiences in different disciplines. The effectiveness of this repeated practice "across the curriculum" has led to parallel efforts in such areas as quantitative reasoning, oral communication, information literacy, and, on some campuses, ethical inquiry.

<https://www.aacu.org/trending-topics/high-impact>

## Appendix E

### Potential Gaps in Core Curriculum

(Competencies, not disciplinary/distribution requirements)

#### **Integrative and Applied learning**

- Summary:
  - “Integrative learning is an understanding and a disposition that a student builds across the curriculum and co-curriculum, from making simple connections among ideas and experiences to synthesizing and transferring learning to new, complex situations within and beyond the campus.”<sup>1</sup>
- Things to consider:
  - More difficult to assess, as it involves connections between academic and non-academic spaces of knowledge production; traditional learning artifacts may be less appropriate measures (reflective writing may be more appropriate)
  - Programs with first-year seminar sequences and senior capstones (Connecticut College, Case Western) set up assessment of this LO nicely as they can be used to measure growth from first year to senior year.
  - Community engaged classes and/or service learning classes are also potential sites of assessment

#### **Interdisciplinary learning**

- Summary:<sup>2</sup>
  - Develop and apply perspective-taking techniques
  - By focusing on a problem or core theme, interdisciplinary learning readily facilitates the development of structural knowledge which is an understanding of higher-order relationships and organizing principles
  - Integrating conflicting views, insights, frameworks, disciplines, and approaches to a problem or topic
  - Synthesizes or produces more comprehensive understanding of a topic or problem
- Things to consider:
  - Some schools have an interdisciplinary seminar experience for first-year students (like the SAGES program at Case Western Reserve) that introduce interdisciplinary modes of inquiry and problem-solving; reinforce the values of liberal arts; and teach students how to approach the classes they will take in disciplines in an integrative way (see above)
  - Are WCO requirements a space to explore such a model? What about classes in departments that are vetted for interdisciplinary programs (like CRES, WGST,

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<sup>1</sup> <https://d38xzozy36dxrv.cloudfront.net/qa/content/user-photos/Offices/OCPI/VALUE/Value-Rubrics-InformationLiteracy.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Repko, Allen F. “Assessing Interdisciplinary Learning Outcomes.” *Academic exchange quarterly* 12 (2008): 171.

Middle East Studies, Asian Studies, British and Colonial Studies, Human-Animal Relations, Contemplative Studies, etc.)

### Digital Information Literacy

- Summary:
  - Students will master the critical digital resources and techniques relevant to the scholarly or creative endeavors of their discipline.<sup>3</sup>
    - Ability to evaluate digital sources, create digital work, engage with large sets of data, understand intellectual property, use digital tools, use scripting languages
- Things to consider:
  - Came up in HMMV subcommittee discussions: Some K-12 have moved away from these requirements with current tech savvy generation of students; some resist the idea that this generation doesn't need to develop specific academic tech-specific tools
  - Many classes already do this; would not require a new set of classes

### Wellness

- Summary:
  - Students demonstrate the ability to practice behaviors that 1.) promote their own emotional, spiritual, physical, social, environmental, cultural, financial, and/or mental wellness 2.) create/foster a space for others to do the same
- Things to Consider:
  - How many classes already do this, under a very broad definition of wellness?
  - Students, including in the 2014 survey, often request these types of classes.

### Teamwork/Collaboration

- Summary:
  - "Teamwork is behaviors under the control of individual team members (effort they put into team tasks, their manner of interacting with others on team, and the quantity and quality of contributions they make to team discussions.)"<sup>4</sup>
- Things to consider:
  - Assess the teamwork of an individual student, not of the team as a whole
  - Many classes across the curriculum already include team-based work

(2/11/2022)

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.brandeis.edu/registrar/bulletin/provisional/arts-sciences/req-ugrd-beginning-fall-2019/dl.html>

<sup>4</sup> <https://d38xzozy36dxrv.cloudfront.net/qa/content/user-photos/Offices/OCPI/VALUE/VALUERubric-TeamworkPreview.pdf>

# Appendix F

TCU

	Fall 2017		Fall 2018		Fall 2019		Fall 2020		Fall 2021	
	# Courses	% Courses	# Courses	% Courses	# Courses	% Courses	# Courses	% Courses	# Courses	% Courses
Faculty	679	76.2%	661	74.4%	670	74.3%	645	70.7%	671	68.5%
Adjunct Faculty	131	14.7%	146	16.4%	155	17.2%	197	21.6%	241	24.6%
Inst. Staff	14	1.6%	14	1.6%	13	1.4%	10	1.1%	8	0.8%
GTA	68	7.6%	68	7.6%	64	7.1%	60	6.6%	60	6.1%
<b>Course Total</b>	<b>891</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>889</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>902</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>912</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>980</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

		Fall 2017		Fall 2018		Fall 2019		Fall 2020		Fall 2021	
		# Courses	% Courses	# Courses	% Courses	# Courses	% Courses	# Courses	% Courses	# Courses	% Courses
AS   AddRan	Faculty	272	70.5%	263	68.7%	282	74.4%	252	66.7%	249	64.3%
College of Liberal Arts	Adjunct Faculty	66	17.1%	80	20.9%	57	15.0%	92	24.3%	107	27.6%
	Inst. Staff	9	2.3%	8	2.1%	7	1.8%	4	1.1%	4	1.0%
	GTA	40	10.4%	32	8.4%	33	8.7%	30	7.9%	27	7.0%
BU   Neeley School of Business	Faculty	31	88.6%	32	80.0%	28	71.8%	29	70.7%	39	67.2%
	Adjunct Faculty	3	8.6%	6	15.0%	11	28.2%	12	29.3%	19	32.8%
CO   Bob Schieffler College of Communication	Inst. Staff	1	2.9%	2	5.0%						
	Faculty	46	55.4%	45	54.2%	46	56.8%	42	55.3%	51	51.0%
College of Education	Adjunct Faculty	17	20.5%	16	19.3%	11	13.6%	12	15.8%	22	22.0%
	Inst. Staff									1	1.0%
	GTA	20	24.1%	22	26.5%	24	29.6%	22	28.9%	26	26.0%
ED   College of Fine Arts	Faculty	13	72.2%	11	84.6%	11	78.6%	8	50.0%	8	47.1%
	Adjunct Faculty	3	16.7%	1	7.7%	1	7.1%	5	31.3%	8	47.1%
	GTA	2	11.1%	1	7.7%	2	14.3%	3	18.8%	1	5.9%
FA   College of Humanities	Faculty	46	68.7%	44	69.8%	41	60.3%	40	58.8%	40	55.6%
	Adjunct Faculty	17	25.4%	15	23.8%	24	35.3%	23	33.8%	29	40.3%
	Inst. Staff	3	4.5%	3	4.8%	2	2.9%	4	5.9%	2	2.8%
	GTA	1	1.5%	1	1.6%	1	1.5%	1	1.5%	1	1.4%
HN   John V. Roach Honors College	Faculty	11	91.7%	5	55.6%	11	78.6%	12	66.7%	13	72.2%
	Adjunct Faculty	1	8.3%	2	22.2%	3	21.4%	5	27.8%	4	22.2%
	Inst. Staff			2	22.2%			1	5.6%	1	5.6%
HS   Harris College of Nursing & Health Sciences	Faculty	23	76.7%	29	90.6%	28	77.8%	33	82.5%	37	88.1%
	Adjunct Faculty	7	23.3%	3	9.4%	4	11.1%	7	17.5%	3	7.1%
	Inst. Staff					3	8.3%				
	GTA					1	2.8%			2	4.8%
IS   School of Interdisciplinary Studies	Faculty	7	87.5%	14	82.4%	13	68.4%	10	50.0%	11	50.0%
	Adjunct Faculty			2	11.8%	5	26.3%	8	40.0%	10	45.5%
	Inst. Staff	1	12.5%	1	5.9%	1	5.3%	2	10.0%		
	GTA									1	4.5%
SE   College of Science & Engineering	Faculty	230	91.3%	218	87.6%	210	83.3%	219	85.9%	223	84.5%
	Adjunct Faculty	17	6.7%	21	8.4%	39	15.5%	33	12.9%	39	14.8%
	GTA	5	2.0%	10	4.0%	3	1.2%	3	1.2%	2	0.8%

Course data are based on data in PeopleSoft at 11:59pm, February 23, 2022 from the TCU Data Warehouse. Curated by Institutional Research for University Planning. Institutional Research, February 2022