

**New Core Curriculum**  
**Spring 2014**  
**Progress report**

During the 2013-2014, the committee for John Carroll University's new Core curriculum, along with its several subcommittees, has made significant progress toward implementing the Core in the 2015-2016 academic year.

While we addressed all components of the new core (either in committee or subcommittee), much of our work this year was on the Foundational Competencies and the Integrated Courses. We focused on the Foundational Competencies (courses in written expression, oral expression, and quantitative analysis) because most students will take these courses during their first year at JCU; and so it is most important to have them fully implemented in our curriculum and course offerings by fall 2015. In our discussions we considered the content of these courses, the learning outcomes (especially in terms of the university learning goals) and plans for assessment. In the fall we will return to these courses for final approval of syllabi and learning outcomes; the courses will be ready for Fall 2015.

The committee also devoted much time to the integrated courses, in part, because these courses represent what is most new and innovative in the Core curriculum. This component of the curriculum includes courses in Engaging the Global Community (team-taught or taught in learning communities), Exploring the Natural World (two linked courses) and Examining Human Experience (two linked courses). Here too, we discussed course content, learning outcomes, and assessment plans; we also focused on various methods of instruction as well as the levels of integration necessary to meet our goals for our students. We approved calls for proposals for courses in each category, distributed the calls to the university faculty, and began the process of networking among faculty members to establish possible partnerships for these courses through a Blackboard site and a face-to-face networking session (more of these to come in the next academic year). We are offering the first round of funding for summer course development grants for summer 2014. We expect that the courses receiving these grants will be among the first of the integrated courses offered in Fall 2015 and Spring 2016. We will not need a full slate of integrated courses immediately in 2015-2016 because the majority of first-year students will be concentrating on the foundational courses; and we anticipate that the majority of our students will be taking the integrated courses in their sophomore year and beyond. However, first-year students—especially those matriculating with appropriate AP/IB credit and transfer students—will also have options for integrated courses in 2015-2016.

In addition to our concentration on Foundational Competencies and Integrated Courses, we discussed the new structure for Philosophy courses (a two-course requirement rather than the current three-course requirement). With the recommendation of the Core committee, the Philosophy department is finalizing this structure, as well as clarifying learning outcomes based on the new Core document. These courses will also be ready for Fall 2015. We also spent time on Social Justice courses, also discussing course criteria, learning outcomes, and assessment plans. We took an inventory of courses we currently

offer that meet Core requirements, and in the fall we will send to the faculty a call for additional Social Justice courses.

In the fall, the committee will review Theology and Religious Studies courses and language courses. Because these courses will not differ substantially in the new Core, they were not top priority this academic year. Although the Core committee did not focus on TRS and language courses, subcommittees within the departments have been spending much time on them. For instance, members of the CMLC department have made good progress in determining a system of testing first-year JCU students for their language proficiency. We have also begun an inventory of our current courses that will meet the Core requirement in Creative and Performing Arts, and beginning in the fall we will evaluate the need for additional course offerings.

The committee has begun preliminary discussions on additional Core requirements in the majors (an additional writing course, an additional presentation component, and a capstone experience). We will continue discussions in the fall. The committee has also begun discussion on the logistics of implementing the new curriculum (when certain courses will need to be scheduled) and on several policy matters, including pre-requisites, double-dipping, transfer credit, and the possibility of blending current and new Core courses in the transition years.

As I indicate above, much of our work has been to identify what university learning outcomes each part of the Core should address and how these outcomes can be measured. The committee understands the importance of establishing assessment plans as we develop each part of the curriculum so that we have an effective means of evaluating the success of the Core after the curriculum is in place.

Looking ahead, in the fall semester the Core committee will be sending to faculty additional information about Core course criteria and will ask for course submissions (for Core approval) in the following areas: foundational quantitative analysis, Engaging the Global Community, Exploring the Natural World, Examining Human Experience, and Issues in Social Justice.

Peter Kvidera  
Director, new Core Curriculum

Members of the new Core Committee:

Tom Pace , Director of Writing  
Brent Brossmann, Director of Public Speaking  
Tom Short, Director of Quantitative Analysis  
Martha Pereszlenyi-Pinter, Chair, Dept. of Classical and Modern Languages and Cultures  
Julia Karolle-Berg, Director of Engaging the Global Community  
Mike Nichols, Director of Exploring the Natural World  
Phil Metres, Director of Examining Human Experience  
Dianna Taylor, Chair, Dept. of Philosophy

Sheila McGinn, Chair, Dept. of Theology and Religious Studies  
Rich Clark, Director of Issues in Social Justice  
Barbara D'Ambrosia, Faculty Council representative  
Jeanne Colleran, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences (*ex officio*)  
Michelle Millet, Director of Grasselli Library (*ex officio*)  
Anne Kugler, Director, Center for Faculty Development (*ex officio*)  
Kathleen Lis-Dean, Assistant Provost for Institutional Effectiveness (*ex officio*)  
Martha Mondello-Hendren, Registrar (*ex officio*)

Members of Core subcommittees:

Writing: Gwen Compton-Engle, Alissa Nutting  
Public Speaking: Jackie Schmidt, Desmond Kwan  
Quantitative Analysis: Colin Swearingen, Andy Welki  
Engaging the Global Community: Maria Marsilli, Jen Zemke  
Exploring the Natural World: Crystal Bruce, Roy Day  
Examining Human Experience: Elizabeth Stiles, Dan Kilbride  
Issue in Social Justice: Debby Rosenthal, Mindy Peden