

21 June 2007

TO: Academic Senate

FROM: Core Review Committee

ABOUT: Aligning Student Learning Aims. (Table II Revised from 16 October 2006 edition after the Academic Senate revised divisional learning aims in January – March 2007.)

The Academic Senate charged the Core Review Committee (CRC) with fostering a conversation about the core curriculum, including a conversation about the alignments (connections, relationships) between the Undergraduate Educational Aims, the Core Purposes, and the student learning aims of the different divisions of the College in the Core. Attached are Tables showing these alignments (connections, relationships) between the student learning aims thus far. Table I shows the alignments between the Undergraduate Learning Aims and the Core Purposes. Table II shows the alignments between the Undergraduate Learning Aims and the Divisional Aims.

These Tables clearly embody unsolved problems in relating these different levels of student learning aims. Here are three of the problems that need solving in the future.

First, the Senate-approved Plan for Assessment (PA) notes that learning aims can embrace “multiple dimensions such as knowledge, cognitive skills, behaviors, achievements, attitudes, and values” (pp. 4, 7). Sometimes PA speaks more simply of assessing the trilogy of “knowledge, skills, and dispositions” (familiar to assessment gurus from Bloom’s taxonomy of learning aims). But PA proposes no single way of articulating the “multiple dimensions” of student learning. Not surprisingly, the attached Tables also have such multiple dimensions, not always neatly sorted out. For example, the enclosed Tables may have goals that are simultaneously knowledge, behavior, and dispositions. Or they may align cognitive skills on one level with behaviors or values on another level. Is “awareness” a cognitive and/or an other sort of disposition? Is “commitment” a disposition and/or a behavior? Future conversations should not assume that the meaning of these basis concepts is settled.

Second, PA (like Middle States) seeks a set of student educational or learning aims (1) for the College, (2) for programs within the College (core, major, minor, interdisciplinary, Alpha, Honors, and so forth), and (3) for specific courses within those programs. These aims need to be aligned, connected, or related. But it is not always clear what “aligned” (connected, related) means. Middle States requires that “institutions must articulate statements of expected student learning at the institutional, program, and individual course levels”, suggesting that these are different levels of “specificity” -- that is, the goals on the higher level will be less specific than those on the lower levels. But Middle States also says that “institutions can be flexible in their approach to defining student learning at these different levels, such as repeated goals (some general education goals, for example) across programs or defining the goals at the institutional or program level as being a synthesis of the goals set at the program and course levels” (Characteristics of Excellence, p. 51). An institution’s “curriculum may address particular learning outcomes in different complementary or overlapping courses and programs” (Student Learning Assessment, p. 19). There is a great deal of such “flexibility” on these Tables.

Third, the student learning aims on these Tables are often lengthy. Does the length mark the complexity of challenging student educational/ learning aims, a lack of consensus on more focused aims, and/or the need for some simple editing? Are we investing the core curriculum with responsibility for too many aims, or recognizing the complexity and diversity of the aspirations of higher education?

These unsolved problems should not be surprising. The Senate charged us not only with

delivering aligned aims but also generating a conversation among faculty about these matters. This is the faculty's first attempt to articulate a set of learning aims aligned on several levels. It will take time and patience for this conversation to mature. After all, what we are interested in is not a mere Table but actually relating (connecting, aligning) the student learning to which we aspire in the College as a whole, our divisions, and eventually our fields and departments. We need to align (or re-align) our relationships with each other before and as we continue to align our student learning aims. But the CRC cannot solve these problems while we are moving on to assessment of the core. Once we complete our assessment snapshot, we will return to the Senate with a recommendation on the next steps to take in solving these problems.

Table I

2001 UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATIONAL AIMS	2005 PURPOSES OF THE CORE CURRICULUM
Intellectual Excellence	
appreciation of and passion for intellectual endeavor and the life of the mind	<i>a capacity for critical thought. to think critically and analytically,</i>
appreciation of and grounding in the liberal arts and sciences	<i>all students bring a shared foundation in the liberal arts to their specialized studies as a result of their work in the core program</i>
excellence in a discipline, including understanding of the relationship between one's discipline and other disciplines; understanding the interconnectedness of all knowledge	<i>all students bring a shared foundation in the liberal arts to their specialized studies as a result of their work in the core program</i>
habits of intellectual curiosity, honesty, humility, and persistence	not only to <i>the transmission of knowledge</i> but also to <i>the development of particular qualities of mind and character.</i> <i>to develop the sharpness and versatility of mind</i> which have always been the hallmarks of a Jesuit education.
Critical Understanding: Thinking, Reading, and Analyzing	
the ability to evaluate a claim based on documentation, plausibility, and logical coherence	<i>. . . the central scientific paradigms, the primary philosophical and theological ideas, and the central debates of the Western cultural heritage.</i> Such familiarity, along with <i>the knowledge of a foreign language</i> , helps to set a foundation for <i>examinations of the ideas and mores of other cultures.</i> A Loyola graduate should be able to <i>think critically and analytically, to reason mathematically, and to understand the methodology of disciplines in both the natural and social sciences.</i>
the ability to analyze and solve problems using appropriate tools	
the ability to make sound judgments in complex and changing environments	

freedom from narrow, solipsistic, or parochial thinking	<i>it liberates students from self-absorption, parochial ideas, and unexamined beliefs,</i>
the ability to use mathematical concepts and procedures competently, and to evaluate claims made in numeric terms	<i>To reason mathematically</i>
the ability to find and assess data about a given topic using general repositories of information, both printed and electronic	
the ability to use information technology in research and problem solving, with an appreciation of its advantages and limitations	
Eloquentia Perfecta	
the ability to use speech and writing effectively, logically, gracefully, persuasively, and responsibly	<i>the ability to communicate effectively and elegantly as a primary goal of liberal education. Therefore writing plays a central role in the core curriculum.</i>
critical understanding of and competence in a broad range of communications media	<i>the ability to communicate effectively and elegantly as a primary goal of liberal education</i>
competence in a language other than one's own	<i>with the knowledge of a foreign language,</i>
Aesthetics	
an appreciation of beauty, both natural and man-made	
a cultivated response to the arts, and the ability to express oneself about aesthetic experience	Familiarity with "great literature"
Leadership	
an understanding of one's strengths and capabilities as a leader and the responsibility one has to use leadership strengths for the common good	
a willingness to act as an agent for positive change, informed by a sense of responsibility to the larger community	
Faith and Mission	
an understanding of the mission of the Catholic university as an institution dedicated to exploring the intersection of faith and reason, and experience and competence in exploring that intersection	<p><i>the unifying objective of the core curriculum extends beyond the provision of fundamental knowledge to the setting of the foundations of intellectual, moral, and spiritual excellence.</i></p> <p><i>To provide a rigorous intellectual foundation for religious faith, for the development of moral convictions, for a life of continuous learning and action in service of that faith and those convictions.</i></p>

	<p>...</p> <p>“theological ideas”</p>
an understanding of the mission of the Society of Jesus and of the religious sisters of Mercy, especially of what it means to teach, learn, lead, and serve "for the greater glory of God.”	
a habit of thoughtful, prayerful, and responsible discernment of the voice of God in daily life; a mature faith	
habits of reflection in solitude and in community	
a commitment to put faith into action	<i>a rigorous intellectual basis for the development of moral convictions, and for a life of continuous learning and action in service of those convictions.</i>
Promotion of Justice	
an appreciation of the great moral issues of our time: the sanctity of human life, poverty, racism, genocide, war and peace, religious tolerance and intolerance, the defense of human rights, and the environmental impact of human activity	<i>setting of the foundations of intellectual, moral, and spiritual excellence.</i>
commitment to promote justice for all, based on a respect for the dignity and sanctity of human life	<i>a rigorous intellectual basis for the development of moral convictions, and for a life of continuous learning and action in service of those convictions</i>
commitment to and solidarity with persons who are materially poor or otherwise disadvantaged	
Diversity	
recognition of the inherent value and dignity of each person, and therefore an awareness of, sensitivity toward, and respect for the differences of race, gender, ethnicity, national origin, culture, sexual orientation, religion, age, and disabilities	<p><i>concern and compassion for others, an appreciation of things past or unfamiliar,</i></p> <p><i>liberates students from self-absorption, parochial ideas, and unexamined beliefs,</i></p> <p><i>examinations of the ideas and mores of other cultures.</i></p>
awareness of the structural sources, consequences, and responsibilities of privilege	<i>An appreciation of the responsibilities of privilege, and for the continued cultivation of a solidarity with the least advantaged in our world.</i>
awareness of the global context of citizenship and an informed sensitivity to the experiences of peoples outside of the United States	<i>Students need a global perspective and a sensitivity to and appreciation for the rich diversity of traditions and perspectives that constitutes our world. Such an understanding of diversity helps to challenge cultural assumptions and fundamental categories, developing a broader, more</i>

	<i>cosmopolitan view</i>
awareness of the multiplicity of perspectives that bear on the human experience, and the importance of historical, global and cultural context in determining the way we see the world	
Wellness	
attentiveness to development of the whole person--mind, body, and spirit	<i>Not only to the transmission of knowledge but also to the development of particular qualities of mind and character</i>
ability to balance and integrate care for self and care for others	<i>Replacing self-absorption, parochial ideas, and unexamined beliefs with concern and compassion for others, appreciation for things past or unfamiliar, and a capacity for critical thought</i>
understanding the importance of productive and responsible use of leisure time	
Freedom from addictive behaviors	
	<i>To understand the methodology of disciplines in both the natural and social sciences.</i>
	<i>familiarity with the history, the great literature, the central scientific paradigms, the primary philosophical and theological ideas, and the central debates of the Western cultural heritage [for other cultural heritages, see quotes next to "Diversity" above]</i>

TABLE II

Divisional Learning Aims → Undergraduate Educational Aims)1 	Humanities. (Approved by Academic Senate 13 March 2007). ²	Natural and Mathematical Sciences (Approved by Academic Senate 23 January 2007)	Social Sciences (Approved by the Academic Senate 6 February 2007)
Intellectual Excellence			
appreciation of and passion for intellectual endeavor and the life of the mind	1. Students advance in the formation of intellectual excellence, conceived through the cultivation of: a perspective on and appreciation for the past; the skills of reading and analyzing arguments; the ability to lodge, probe and respond to rational arguments; the analysis, weighing and marshalling of evidence; the manifestation of appropriate degrees of skepticism and consent and the practical wisdom needed to order all of these skills and abilities toward a desired and defensible end.	1. Students develop their innate curiosity about the natural world and take a life-long interest in science news and advancements Conclusion: . . . each course should seek to engage students with topics that interest them. . . .	1.Students think critically and independently about themselves, other individuals, groups, organizations, societies, governments, and cultures of the world and the relations between and among these entities, within the context of at least one of the social science disciplines. 2.Students develop their curiosity about the social world and develop a life long interest in understanding how individuals are shaped by society and how they shape society.
appreciation of and grounding in the liberal arts and sciences	See 1 above	See 1 above	See 2 above.
Excellence in a discipline, including understanding of the relationship between one's discipline and other disciplines; understanding the interconnectedness of all knowledge	3. .Students learn the nature of questions the various disciplines in the humanities raise and the different methods these disciplines use to refine and answer these questions..	See 1 above. 2. Students explore one or more of the central ideas that form the foundation for modern science.	3.Students explore the central ideas that form the foundation for modern social science. They understand how various social forces (such as historical, cultural, political, economic, global, moral, religious) shape human behavior and action.

¹ “The Senate adopts the nine broad undergraduate educational aims as learning aims for the core curriculum, with the understanding that these aims are to be viewed in the context of the overall mission of the College and the statement of purposes of the core. These aims are an interconnected set of specifications expressing the distinctiveness of Loyola education. As such, they apply to the core as a whole. . . .” (Approved by the Academic Senate December 2005)

² Introduction: “It should be clear that no single core course can accomplish the aims set out here, and that each course in the humanities core can only contribute to the achievement of a subset of these aims. It is our intent, however, that a student completing the entire humanities core, will have achieved these aims.”

Divisional Learning Aims → Undergraduate Educational Aims)1 	Humanities. (Approved by Academic Senate 13 March 2007). 2	Natural and Mathematical Sciences (Approved by Academic Senate 23 January 2007)	Social Sciences (Approved by the Academic Senate 6 February 2007)
habits of intellectual curiosity, honesty, humility, and persistence	See 1 above	See 1 above	See 2 above. Introduction: The study of the Social Sciences teaches respect for humankind as well as humility in the face of that which we do not understand
Critical Understanding: Thinking, Reading, and Analyzing			
the ability to evaluate a claim based on documentation, plausibility, and logical coherence	See 1 above	See 1 & 2 above, 3 & 4 below. Preface: Our students need to acquire the skills to critically analyze scientific information of all kinds that is purveyed through various media so that, at a minimum, they can recognize sound and valid arguments.	See 1 and 2 above, 3 and 4 below
the ability to analyze and solve problems using appropriate tools	See 1 above	3. Students understand the process of science - its methodology, how questions are framed, how data are acquired, how arguments are constructed and conclusions reached . In this context, students should learn what science is <i>not</i> and have the ability to recognize and reject pseudoscientific claims. In addition, students should also have the ability to recognize the limits of science. Students also should understand the relationship between science and technology and how the results of scientific discovery can be applied to the needs of	4. Students understand the inquiry processes that support knowledge formation in the social sciences including: methods, limitations, how questions are framed, how data are acquired, how arguments are constructed, and conclusions reached. Introduction: The study of the Social Sciences teaches respect for humankind as well as humility in the face of that which we do not understand

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		society. Students should learn the linkage between experimental methodology and scientific content.	
the ability to make sound judgments in complex and changing environments	See 1 above	See 3 above	See 4 above
freedom from narrow, solipsistic, or parochial thinking	See 1 above as well as 7 and 8 below	See 1 above	See 1 & 2 above
the ability to use mathematical concepts and procedures competently, and to evaluate claims made in numeric terms	XXX	4. Students learn to reason mathematically, and to think critically and analytically through statistical or mathematical methods. Because of the close interrelationship between science and math, in each science course in the core students will achieve a better understanding of the power of mathematical and statistical tools used in the particular discipline.	5. Students will learn the power of social science methods, the use of quantitative and qualitative methods and reasoning, and the various ways these methods are integrated.
the ability to find and assess data about a given topic using general repositories of information, both printed and electronic	See 2 below	See 3 above.	See 4 above. 5. Students learn the power of social science methods, the use of quantitative and qualitative methods and reasoning, and the various ways these methods are integrated.
the ability to use information technology in research and problem solving, with an appreciation of its advantages and limitations	See 2 and 3 below	See 3 above. 5. Students learn how recent technological advances have facilitated and accelerated scientific inquiry. They gain a realistic understanding of	See 4 above.

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		the potential and limitations of computation	
Eloquentia Perfecta			
the ability to use speech and writing effectively, logically, gracefully, persuasively, and responsibly	2. Students learn that they must meet a standard of eloquence before their ideas can be taken seriously. Students write in many different forms such as analytical papers, research papers using primary and secondary source material to construct an argument, creative writing that directly allows students to express their own voices. Students are challenged to voice their opinions and defend those opinions with evidence and rational argument. They develop better habits of rhetorical technique, presenting ideas with clarity and defending arguments with conviction. Students develop an understanding and appreciation of the expressive and communicative possibilities of the visual and performing arts.	xxx	xxx
Critical understanding of and competence in a broad range of communications media	XX or see 3. Students learn the nature of question the various disciplines in the humanities raise and the different methods these disciplines use to refine and answer these	See 3 above	See 4 above

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	questions.		
competence in a language other than one's own	See 7 below	XX	XX
Aesthetics			
an appreciation of beauty, both natural and man-made	See 2 above. 4. Students learn the place that the appreciation of beauty holds within the humanist tradition, develop an understanding of the many definitions of beauty, and grow both in critical appreciation of beauty and in the ability to articulate the ground of that appreciation.	See 1 above	XX
a cultivated response to the arts, and the ability to express oneself about aesthetic experience	See 4 above.	XX	XX
Leadership			
an understanding of one's strengths and capabilities as a leader and the responsibility one has to use leadership strengths for the common good	5. Students come to understand that there are many notions of leadership, and that they are not all compatible, as well as, how those diverse notions arise from and are sustained by particular social and political structures.	XX	Introduction: Similarly, our students will appreciate the impact their actions may have on others and society as they prepare to lead, learn, serve, and address social justice issues in a diverse and changing world
a willingness to act as an agent for positive change, informed by a sense of responsibility to the larger community	See 5 ("informed by a sense of responsibility to the larger community") above and 8 ("awareness of the great moral issues of our time") below	See 3 above.	Introduction:

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Faith and Mission			
an understanding of the mission of the Catholic university as an institution dedicated to exploring the intersection of faith and reason, and experience and competence in exploring that intersection	6. Students enter into the ongoing discussion of the relation of the college to the specific beliefs and practices of the Society of Jesus and Catholicism more generally	See 3 above (students should learn what science is <i>not</i> , have the ability to recognize and reject pseudoscientific claims. In addition, students should also have the ability to recognize the limits of science)	6.Students reflect upon the implications of social scientific knowledge for issues such as community, social justice, diversity, service, and faith and mission, as well as the interrelation among them
an understanding of the mission of the Society of Jesus and of the religious sisters of Mercy, especially of what it means to teach, learn, lead, and serve "for the greater glory of God."	See 6 in row above. 9. Students ask and answer questions about God, about justice, and about civic good. They evaluate information so as to judge its veracity in an informed fashion. They engage in discussions about individuals and their communities and such discussions assist students in living a more examined life.	XX	Cp. 3 above. Students . . . understand how various social forces (such as historical, cultural, political, economic, global, moral, religious) shape human behavior and action.
a habit of thoughtful, prayerful, and responsible discernment of the voice of God in daily life; a mature faith	6 (for "mature faith")	XX	XX
habits of reflection in solitude and in community	See 1 above	XX	XX
a commitment to put faith into action	See 9 above ("such discussions assist students in living a more examined life").	XX	XX
Promotion of Justice			

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an appreciation of the great moral issues of our time: the sanctity of human life, poverty, racism, genocide, war and peace, religious tolerance and intolerance, the defense of human rights, and the environmental impact of human activity	8. Students come to an awareness of the great moral issues of our time (e.g. the value of human life, poverty, racism, sexism, genocide, war and peace, religious tolerance and intolerance, the defense of human rights, the environmental impact of human activity) and an understanding of the complexity of thought and opinion that attends these issues.	. . . so that, at a minimum [students] can recognize sound and valid arguments. In our increasingly interconnected and dependent world, this is crucial for personal and public decision making that will bear on the future life of our planet.	See 6 above
commitment to promote justice for all, based on a respect for the dignity and sanctity of human life	See 8 & 9 above	XX	See 6 above.
commitment to and solidarity with persons who are materially poor or otherwise disadvantaged	See 8 above	XX	See 6 above
Diversity			
recognition of the inherent value and dignity of each person, and therefore an awareness of, sensitivity toward, and respect for the differences of race, gender, ethnicity, national origin, culture, sexual orientation, religion, age, and disabilities	7. Students think about their own culture and learn, through acquiring knowledge about cultures and languages other than their own, to understand and value the diversity of human experience. .	XX	See 1 and 2 and 3 above and 6 below. Introduction: . . . our students will appreciate the impact their actions may have on others and society as they prepare to lead, learn, serve, and address social justice issues in a diverse and changing world
awareness of the structural sources, consequences, and responsibilities of privilege	8. Students come to an awareness of the great moral issues of our time (e.g. the value of human life, poverty, racism, sexism, genocide, war and peace, religious tolerance and intolerance, the defense of human	XX	See 1 and 2 and 3 and 6 above.

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	rights, the environmental impact of human activity) and an understanding of the complexity of thought and opinion that attends these issues.		
awareness of the global context of citizenship and an informed sensitivity to the experiences of peoples outside of the United States	See 7 and 8 and 9 above.	XX	See 1 and 2 and 3 above.
awareness of the multiplicity of perspectives that bear on the human experience, and the importance of historical, global and cultural context in determining the way we see the world	See 7 and 8 above.	See 1 above.	See 1 and 2 above.
Wellness			
attentiveness to development of the whole person--mind, body, and spirit	See 7 above.	XX	XX
ability to balance and integrate care for self and care for others	See 7 above`	.Preface: . . crucial for personal and public decision-making that will bear on the future life of our planet.	See Introduction: The Social Sciences aim to provide a framework for understanding ourselves and the interrelations between other individuals, groups, organizations, societies, governments, and cultures.
understanding the importance of productive and responsible use of leisure time	XX	XX	XX
Freedom from addictive behaviors	XX	XX	XX