

# CORE REVIEW COMMITTEE

CONCLUSIONS AND  
RECOMMENDATIONS

# PORTFOLIO PROJECT

- Significant findings:
  - Some aims are easier to find than others
  - Portfolio project leads to an appreciation of the integrative aspects of the core
  - Students were not familiar with learning aims at the start of the project
- Questions and concerns:
  - Relation of many first year classes to high school work
  - Large core + major + minor + study abroad = limited opportunities to explore new areas
  - Foreign language requirement
  - Relation of study abroad, transfer credits and other college policies to core
- General Observations:
  - Engagement with undergraduate aims extends beyond core to major and various extra-curricular activities

# One Student's Observation

- “My experience with the core curriculum at Loyola College shows that it is able to successfully integrate each of the learning aims into a whole. Different classes have addressed different learning aims, and by the completion of the core requirements I have a collection of experiences which show my exposure to almost all of the learning aims. Through this project I have found that not only have I been exposed to these learning aims once, but many times. I learned several of these aims together and in multiple classes.”

# Student Survey

- Noteworthy findings (positive perceptions):
  - Better at evaluating claims based on documentation and logical coherence
  - Relate material in my discipline to other disciplines
  - Interested in pursuing new ideas
  - Improved writing skills
  - Improved understanding of the Jesuit mission
  - Think about issues of who has privileges
  - Developed ability to work with others
  - Enhanced awareness of development of whole person—mind, body, spirit

# Student Survey

- Noteworthy findings (less able to):
  - Use information technology in research and problem-solving
  - Mathematical skills
  - Public speaking skills
  - Explain fundamental religious beliefs
  - Deepen sense of solidarity with disadvantaged in society
  - Greater personal commitment to work to reduce inequalities
  - Expression of the appreciation of beauty
  - Deepened understanding of what makes something beautiful

# Issues and Recommendations

- Awareness and application of aims
- Integration of core courses
- Size of the core and flexibility
- Ongoing assessment

# Awareness and Application of Aims

- Individual faculty teaching in the core should give careful thought to which of the aims can be addressed within their classes and how they will be addressed
- Students should be made aware of these aims both in the syllabus and in class discussions during the course of the semester

# Awareness and Application of Aims

- The college needs to continue to support faculty development initiatives emphasizing the ways in which Ignatian pedagogy can be employed.
- Faculty should design classroom exercises that prompt students to reflect on the ways in which their classroom experience has enriched their appreciation of the learning aims.

# Integration of Core Courses

- Faculty Development
  - Encourage curricular and course experimentation
  - Initiatives should be supported that encourage cross-disciplinary pedagogical activity
  - A reading group for faculty on core texts

# Integration of Core Courses

- Curricular Initiatives
  - Support for individual and team-taught interdisciplinary courses in the core
  - Linked courses, on the model of Collegium, featuring an overlapping curriculum and a living-learning community
  - Writing across the curriculum and in the disciplines
  - Attention to math, statistical and quantitative reasoning across the curriculum

# Integration of Core Courses

- Student Development
  - Increased emphasis on ties between classroom activities and extra-curricular initiatives (e.g., service learning)
  - Collaborations with student development offices

# Size of the Core

- Initial question: Is the core too big?
  - Comparison with other Jesuit schools
    - Range is from 21 (Xavier, Creighton) to 11 (Gonzaga, San Francisco)
    - Median and mode are 18
  - Derek Bok: There is no agreed upon metric to determine the effectiveness of any curriculum—core, gen-ed, “great books”, etc.

# Size of the Core

- Possible change
  - Treat the second course requirement in the Humanities as a distribution requirement, and require three rather than four additional courses in HS, EN, PL, TH.
- Rationale for the Change
  - Encourage broad curiosity
  - Give professional programs more flexibility

# Assessment

- Need for an ongoing committee
  - Review the alignment of departmental aims with core aims
  - Examine the multiple assessment instruments departments use to determine their success in achieving core aims
  - Determine whether students completing the core curriculum have advanced in their intellectual, social, and moral development (as described in the learning aims)
  - Administrative support for both on-going and periodic core review

# Some Possible Instruments for Assessment

- Survey
  - Improvement of current student and faculty survey
  - Development of alumni and employer surveys
- Portfolio project
- Class reflection assignments
- Entrance/Exit Work