

November 15, 2005

TO: Academic Senate
FROM: Frank Cunningham
Chair, Core Review Committee
RE: Interim Report

I. The Core Review Committee distributed copies of its Interim Report Academic Year 2004-2005 to all members of the faculty in advance of the September 22nd faculty meeting. This report was a slightly modified version of the report given to the Academic Senate in April 2005. The modifications reflected comments and suggestions made by senators at the May 10, 2005 meeting.

The report makes three recommendations to the Academic Senate:

- (1) The adoption of new language on the Purposes of the Core, to be included in the Undergraduate College Catalogue;
- (2) The adoption of the nine broad undergraduate learning 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 in the context of the statement on the purposes of the core. These should not be understood as discrete aims among which one is free to choose, but as an interconnected set of specifications of the distinctiveness of Loyola education. As such, they apply to the core as a whole.
- (3) The central place of faith and missions in the educational enterprise needs to be fully and seriously discussed.

II. Since the September faculty meeting, the Core review Committee has continued its discussion of divisional learning aims. Members of the committee have met with faculty from the Social Sciences, the Natural Sciences, and the Humanities to refine the aims appropriate to these sub-sections of the core. Attached are tentatively proposed aims for the Social Sciences and the Natural Sciences.

The issues are somewhat more complicated in the Humanities, in part because the core requirements here are not distribution requirements but more specific course requirements, and in part because the integration of the nine learning aims seems to fall more heavily on this part of the core. Discussions here are continuing, and we offer less specific recommendations at this time. Those recommendations are also attached.

DIVISIONAL AIMS FOR THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

The original 15 Social Science Core aims were condensed and modified as follows:

1. To provide students with an understanding and appreciation of the individual as a unique person and of the interaction between the individual and society (how individuals are shaped by society and how they shape society) from a scientific perspective;
2. To provide an understanding and appreciation of the historical, cultural, global, and moral perspectives (with an emphasis on issues related to social justice and diversity) and how they have influenced the understanding of human behavior in a social context and the social factors that influence social policy
3. To provide students with an understanding and appreciation of scientific method, systematic inquiry, and the role of theory as it is applied to individuals in social situations; and to provide students with the tools necessary to apply the information (via being critical consumers of information and clear communicators) gathered through the scientific method
4. To help students apply social science concepts (including applying these concepts to self-examination and discernment) when evaluating information from a variety of sources and to clearly communicate these ideas.

DIVISIONAL AIMS FOR THE MATHEMATICAL AND NATURAL SCIENCES

Participants in the Fall 2005 divisional meetings generally agreed with aims as presented in the Senate report. However, these aims have been slightly rearranged and consolidated to take the following form:

1. Students develop their innate curiosity about the natural world and take a life-long interest in science news and advancements.
2. Students explore the one or more of the central ideas that form the foundation for modern science at a greater depth than presented in high school.
3. Students understand the process of science - its methodology, its limitations, how questions are framed, how data are acquired, how arguments are constructed and conclusions reached¹.
4. Students learn the power of mathematical methods, the use of quantitative reasoning and symbolic logic, and how these tools are integrated across all the scientific disciplines.

¹ In this context, students should learn what science is *not*, and have the ability to recognize and reject pseudoscientific claims. Students also should understand the relationship between science and technology.

HUMANITIES LEARNING AIMS

It should be noted that several departments in the Humanities (e.g. Theology, Philosophy, Classics, English, and History) have completed departmental reviews, and have discussed the relation of their departments and their core courses to the Undergraduate Learning Aims. It should also be noted that discussions are ongoing within and among departments on the extent to which the Humanities offerings in the core lend themselves to integration and the extent to which these offerings as a whole address the nine learning aims. The following suggestions are offered to advance the discussion of the learning aims appropriate to the Humanities.

1. The structure of the humanities core, which is not a distribution requirement but a departmental and course requirement, should promote disciplinary integration and a sense of the purpose of the core.
2. The introductory courses in English, philosophy, theology, and history, as well as the second intermediate language requirement, should be encouraged to develop an integrated curriculum, at least to the extent that faculty are aware of the content and pedagogical aims of one another's classes.
3. The Humanities courses in the core address in varying ways and to varying degrees the overarching set of nine undergraduate learning aims. Departments in the Humanities need to have substantive discussions about what each of the nine learning aims might mean within each department, and how the college's commitment to these aims might shape course curriculum.