

2/26/18

TO: Dr. Emily Butler
Chair, Faculty Council

FROM: Rodney Hessinger (Director, Integrative Core Curriculum); the Integrative Core Curriculum Committee; Nick Santilli, Interim Provost and Academic Vice President, JCU

RE: Proposed Revision to the Administrative Structure of the Core Curriculum: Eliminating Core Category Subcommittees

I. Proposal Summary

Core Subcommittees have rendered invaluable service in implementing the Core, reviewing and assessing hundreds of classes. Now that we developed a large roster of classes carrying Core designation, many fewer classes will need to be reviewed. In addition, last semester the Core Curriculum instituted a new system of assessing Core classes which eliminates assessment work for subcommittee members. Thus, the need for the subcommittees has largely been eliminated. While a representative for each specific category will remain on the Committee, the larger Core Committee has become adept at reviewing classes across Core categories. As such, we are recommending the disbandment of the subcommittees .

II. Proposal Rationale

Since the Fall of 2014, the subcommittees for EGC, Linked (formerly EHE and ENW), ISJ, CAPA, Writing, and Oral Presentation have reviewed 354 different classes for Core designation. It would have been very difficult for the Core Committee alone to review this volume of courses. While the larger Core Committee did have the ultimate vote, much of the necessary work of providing feedback on proposals, encouraging revisions to get them in shape for final approval happened at the subcommittee level. In the past the number of proposals handled per semester was quite large: the average number of proposals per term between Spring '15 and Spring '17 was 47 (with a range between 26 and 64). The volume of proposals has now shrunk considerably (13 total for Fall 2017) and is expected to stay at this lower level. We have moved from implementation into maintenance of the Core Curriculum. Thus, the Core Committee itself (with resident experts for each Core category) should be able to manage the review work.

In the Fall of 2017 the Core Committee changed the approach to assessing Core classes (see Appendix A for summary of these changes). Rather than asking every instructor for every Core class to assess for every Core goal associated with a particular Core designation, we have moved

to a system of sampling. In the past, the subcommittee (along with volunteers solicited from the wider faculty) would review the data submitted by instructors, as well as review a subset of the collected student work. Now, we will be asking a subset of faculty teaching a Core class to collect student work and generate assessment data. A subset of this subset will then be offered a stipend to participate in a Core Assessment Day. Five faculty members who have taught within the target category will talk about their own experience teaching, review student work from another course, and look at the cumulative assessment data. They will be asked to reflect upon what worked well and what did not, making suggestions for improvement. Having thus put assessment work firmly in the hands of the instructors, the labor of the subcommittees in this regard is no longer necessary.

III. Changes to Operative Core Document

In the Fall of 2017 the Core Committee reviewed and verified the accuracy of the “Faculty Guide” to the Core Curriculum (Appendix B). This document represents all the current and operative aspects of the Core Curriculum (the original APTF Integrative Core document has been revised 7 times since the Core was ratified in April 2013). Rather than identifying changes to one of the 8 different Core documents, this proposal will make reference to the cumulative endpoint of these documents as captured in the Faculty Guide. If these changes are ratified, the Faculty Guide will then be updated to reflect the approved changes.

Page 15: enjoins the Core Director, when necessary, to consult the “directors of the relevant subcommittees” when making transfer credit decisions; instead the Core Director will now consult with the Core Committee representative of the relevant category.

Page 16: describes the routing process for proposals. Proposals will now go directly from chairs to the Core Committee; they will not go to subcommittees.

Page 17: assigns responsibility for giving feedback to applicants to the subcommittees. Feedback to applicants will now be given by the Core Director or a designee.

Pages 18-19: provide a summary of assessment processes. These will be modified to fit new assessment approach (as summarized in Appendix A).

Page 28: summarizes duties of subcommittees; this should be removed.

Pages 28-30: Chart lists membership for subcommittees. Eliminate this column. However, duties performed by CMLC, PL, and TRS departments (who act as “subcommittees” for their respective Core requirements will be added to document.

Page 31: strike AW and OP roles for Writing and Oral Presentation subcommittees

Assessment Comparison

Instructor Assessment Work

When the time comes to actually implement the course, faculty members will be asked to select at least one assignment that addresses each learning goal (with the possibility that one assignment may address multiple goals). As part of (or parallel to) grading those assignments, the faculty member will complete a rubric approved by the Core Committee and provide the scores as well as some record of the student's actual work to the Core Committee. The Committee and the Director of Assessment strongly recommend the use of Canvas, the institution's learning management system, to complete this process. ★

At the end of the semester, faculty teaching in each category will also be asked to provide feedback for the Core Committee. The assessment process will be included in the topics queried.

Sub-Committee Assessment Work

Each semester, each sub-committee will invite those who have taught courses in that category to join them in their assessment work. Sub-committees (and any additional instructors) will then norm the rubric: using a small sample of student work from across courses, they will each score all of the assignments on the rubric. They will then meet to discuss their scores and resolve any differences, so that everyone is giving the same work a similar score. The sub-committees will then distribute a larger sample of assignments so that each assignment is scored by two evaluators. Any work on which the two evaluators disagree by more than a single rating category will be scored by a third evaluator.

Sub-Committee Assessment Meetings

During the afternoon following the Cross-Course Assessment work, the category directors

~~During a designated half day during the week between exams and commencement, the sub-committees~~ will hold an assessment meeting (open to instructors who have taught in the category as well as other interested parties) to examine aggregated data from the instructors' and the cross-course assessment work and the feedback in order to make recommendations for improvements to the process and to the curriculum itself (learning goals, recommended pedagogy, faculty development, policies, etc.).

Each semester, all instructors will be invited to participate, but a randomly selected subset of instructors will be required to participate.

CATEGORY COURSES (QA, EGC, LINK, ISJ, and CAPA)

The following sampling procedure will be used: all instructors teaching in given category for the first time will be chosen, then additional instructors up to one-quarter (rounding down) of all sections offered in the category in the semester will be selected randomly. Once a particular instructor has been selected in a given semester, all of the instructor's other core courses in this set of categories are removed from the pool of possible courses for the current and next three semesters.

For any sections with twenty or more students enrolled, instructors completing this assessment work are allowed to provide data and work from a sample of fifteen students. The assessment office will provide the instructor with the names and IDs of the students for whom data are to be reported.

Cross-Course Assessment Work

CATEGORY COURSES (QA, EGC, LINK, ISJ, CAPA)

Each spring semester in each of these categories, six instructors will be chosen randomly from the ones required to participate in instructor assessment in the current semester or the previous fall semester. Each instructor chosen will be provided with a small sample of student work from the category for use in norming, which they will read and score on the rubric. Additionally, each instructor will receive two class sets of student work in such a way that each member receives the same sets as one other member. This work will typically be taken from courses offered over the most recent three semesters.

During a designated morning during the week between exams and commencement, the instructors will meet to norm the rubric. They will each compare their rubrics scores for all of the assignments in the norming set and discuss their scores to resolve any differences, so that everyone is giving the same work a similar score. Each member will then work with the group member with the same sets of student work to give each item rubric scores on which they agree.

	OFFERINGS	ACTUAL						MODEL			
		Instructor		Cross-Course		Instructor		Cross-Course			
		Students	Sections*	Students	Sections*	Students	Sections*	Students	Sections*	Students	Sections*
QA	Fall '15	370	17	129	11	45	4	57	4		
	Spring '16	542	20	145	11	11	2	81	5	90	6
	Fall '16	508	17	236	12	0	0	65	4		
	Spring '17	578	21	109	7	0	0	71	5	90	6
	Fall '17	489	20	0	0	0	0	77	5		
	total	2487	95	619	41	56	6	274	18	180	12
EGC	Fall '15	25	1	0	0	0	0	0	0		
	Spring '16	215	9	157	7	29	4	30	2	90	6
	Fall '16	363	15	363	15	12	1	41	3		
	Spring '17	535	25	378	21	0	0	88	6	90	6
	Fall '17	442	23	0	0	0	0	80	5		
	total	1580	73	898	43	41	5	159	11	180	12
LINK	Fall '15	10	1	0	0	4	1	0	0		
	Spring '16	130	10	113	12	10	2	22	2	90	6
	Fall '16	194	10	179	11	44	5	35	2		
	Spring '17	285	12	137	11	0	0	49	3	90	6
	Fall '17	294	14	0	0	0	0	45	3		
	total	913	47	429	34	58	8	106	7	180	12
ISJ	Fall '15	309	17	0	0	0	0	60	4		
	Spring '16	344	16	173	9	49	6	57	4	90	6
	Fall '16	742	32	383	20	4	1	129	8		
	Spring '17	681	29	310	16	0	0	106	7	90	6
	Fall '17	707	33	0	0	0	0	108	8		
	total	2783	127	866	45	53	7	352	23	180	12
TOTAL	7763	342	2812	163	208	26	891	59	720	48	

**"Sections" are actually linked pairs for LINK