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**Approach to Establishing Courses in UALR's New General Education Curriculum  
Report from the Ad Hoc Criteria Committee of the UALR Faculty Senate  
7 December 2012**

The Senate's Ad Hoc Criteria Committee, consisting of John Burgin, Marian Crawford, Steve Edison, Sara Beth Estes (liaison to Executive Committee), Jim Golden, Angela Hunter, Nicholas Jovanovic, and Joanne Liebman Matson, met during October and November 2012 to develop an approach to establishing courses in UALR's new general education curriculum. The following is the Majority Report of the committee. A Minority Report by Senator Jovanovic will also be presented to the Senate.

***Primary Concern: Transparency***

The Committee's overarching concern is that the approach be transparent, that the criteria for courses be spelled out clearly, and that all programs be welcome to submit proposals for courses to meet these criteria.

The Committee recommends, therefore, that the university develop a website for students and faculty about General Education. This website should provide a clear description of the curriculum for students as well as a clear process for submitting course proposals. The University of Kansas at <http://kucore.ku.edu/> and Texas Tech at <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/provost/newcore/index.php> have developed such websites, and the committee recommends UALR aspire to such clarity and elegance.

***Educational Outcomes and Goals***

In the UCR proposal, there are nine "educational outcomes" defined as essential to the undergraduate curriculum. Of these outcomes, three are skills, two are knowledge domains, and four are values:

**Skills:**

1. Communication (oral, written, visual, second language; professional self-presentation).
2. Critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, and solving problems individually and collaboratively.
3. Information technology (locating, retrieving, evaluating, synthesizing).

**Knowledge:**

1. The concepts, methodologies, findings, and applications of mathematics and the social and natural sciences, engineering and technology.
2. The concepts, methodologies, and the global cultural heritage of the arts and humanities.

Values:<sup>1</sup>

1. Commitment to ethical behavior.
2. Civic and personal responsibility.
3. Global perspective and cultural sensitivity.
4. Appreciating diversity.

The Committee used these “outcomes” as the basis for defining the criteria for courses. However, the committee recommends that the list instead be called “Educational Goals” since these terms reflect broad areas of concern rather than more detailed, action-oriented outcomes students can demonstrate. For the remainder of this document, they will thus be called “**Educational Goals.**”<sup>2</sup>

Additionally, as the committee worked with the list, it found overlap among the four items listed as values. The committee therefore adopted a modified list of values:

Values (*redefined*):

1. Ethical behavior and personal responsibility.
2. Civic responsibility.
3. Global and cultural knowledge.<sup>3</sup>

This is the terminology used in the documents that follow for each of the Curriculum Areas. Thus, the committee recommends a modified list of *eight* Educational Goals.

**Mapping the Goals to the Curriculum Areas**

The UCR Report proposed a general education core consisting of requirements in seven different **curriculum areas**:

1. English/Communications [now renamed “English Language/Communication”] – 9 hrs.
2. Mathematics – 3 hrs.
3. Science – 8 hrs.
4. Fine Arts – 3 hrs.
5. Humanities – 3 hrs.
6. Social Sciences – 6 hrs.
7. US Traditions – 3 hrs.

The committee made a small modification to the list of curriculum areas, rearranging

<sup>1</sup> There is a proposal in the Faculty Senate to change the name of the “Values” goals. If the name is changed, the committee will change this document’s recommendations accordingly.

<sup>2</sup> This change from “Outcomes” to “Goals” is one of several modifications recommended by the committee as a result of our working with the UCR framework to develop criteria. Calling these items “goals” will be more consistent with generally accepted terminology. The committee recommends that the Senate amend the current UCR proposal to reflect this change.

<sup>3</sup> Because of the overlap in the original four values, the committee found it difficult to consistently and logically identify learning objectives for each goal. The documents that follow will include these three modified “values,” and the committee recommends the UCR plan be appropriately amended.



the "Social Sciences" area to include three sub-areas: "US Traditions," "World Civilization," and "Other Social Sciences." Thus the new general education core will consist of requirements in a total of eight areas or sub-areas:

1. English/Communications [now renamed "English Language/Communication"] – 9 hrs.
2. Mathematics – 3 hrs.
3. Science – 8 hrs.
4. Fine Arts – 3 hrs.
5. Humanities – 3 hrs.
6. Social Sciences
  - a. US Traditions – 3 hrs.
  - b. World Civilization – 3 hrs.
  - c. Other Social Sciences – 3 hrs.<sup>4</sup>

In defining the criteria for courses in each area, the Ad Hoc Criteria Committee considered the **Educational Goals** that should be addressed in each **Curriculum Area**. Once it did so, the committee then developed more specific **Learning Objectives** for each area to indicate what we expect students in these classes to know and be able to do. Here is an example of this approach from the English Language/Communications Area:

Curriculum Area	Educational Goal	Learning Objective
English Language/Communication	Communication (Skills 1)	Students should demonstrate they can communicate effectively in a variety of contexts for a variety of purposes to a variety of audiences in rhetorically appropriate ways through listening, reading, speaking, and writing in a variety of speech and writing genres.

In the appendix to this report, the committee includes charts outlining the Educational Goals and Learning Objectives expected within each of the eight Curricular Areas.

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<sup>4</sup> This change reflects the requirements in the UCR proposal for courses in these three distinct areas. This structure also reflects that of the State Minimum Core document. Again, it is a minor change that the committee found necessary as it sought to define criteria for courses that were to meet each of these curriculum areas. Courses in World Civilization cannot be described with the same Learning Objectives as courses in US Traditions and Other Social Sciences. The committee therefore recommends that the UCR proposal be appropriately amended.

**Guidelines for UALR General Education Core Courses**

The Ad Hoc Criteria Committee proposes the following general guidelines for courses in the UALR General Education Core:

1. Course proposals submitted to [group to be determined] must explain how the course content and assignments will help students achieve the particular educational goals and learning objectives of the curriculum area. Proposals must include supporting evidence such as assignments, syllabi, and methods of evaluation.
2. The proposal must also include an assessment plan that explains how evidence will be systematically gathered to determine whether students are meeting the goals and objectives specified in the course proposal. Assessment data will be periodically submitted for review and analysis.
3. All approved courses will be reviewed periodically by [group to be determined] to assure the course continues to meet the original criteria and should continue to be included in the UALR General Education Core.
4. All courses for the General Education Core must be 1000- or 2000-level. Requests for higher-level courses are strongly discouraged and must be accompanied by a justification that explains why a lower-level course cannot be substituted for the upper-level one.
5. The course must be designed for any student to take as part of his or her general university education (as opposed to courses designed primarily for a major). However, courses may still be included in a major or minor's requirements so long as the course also meets the General Education Core requirements.
6. No course may satisfy more than one curriculum area in the General Education Core.
7. As reflected on the following charts, all courses must address a minimum of one skill and one value in addition to any appropriate knowledge domain.
8. The [group to be determined] will develop application forms reflecting these guidelines.



**Appendix: Educational Goals and Learning Objectives for Each Curriculum Area**

**Courses to meet the Area of English Language/Communications:**

**Courses in this area** focus on teaching students to develop ideas and express them clearly, adapt language to rhetorical situations, and build the skills needed to communicate ethically and effectively in their academic, professional, and civic lives.

Courses focus either on reading and writing or speaking and listening. All courses in this area also address information technology, critical thinking, a commitment to ethical behavior, and civic and personal responsibility.

Curriculum Area	Educational Goals	Learning Objectives Students should:
English Language/Communication	Skills 1 - Communication	-- demonstrate they can communicate effectively in a variety of contexts for a variety of purposes to a variety of audiences in rhetorically appropriate ways through listening, reading, speaking, and writing in a variety of speech and writing genres
		-- know the conventions of Standard English; -- be able to communicate fluently, clearly, and correctly in interpersonal exchanges and extended discourses, both written and oral
		-- understand that communication is inherently a collaborative, dynamic, and social process; --develop flexible strategies for generating, revising, editing, and proof-reading
	Skills 2 – Critical Thinking	-- be able to consider and evaluate alternatives, evidence, and other discourse; -- be able to reflect on their own and others' language and communication, developing meta-cognitive knowledge to promote effective communication in the present and lifelong improvement of communication skills.
	Skills 3 – Information Technology	-- be able to use information resources like the Internet reflectively for inquiry, exploration, and communication -- be able to use word-processing, presentation software, and other technologies to compose texts and presentations
	Values 1- Ethical Behavior and Personal Responsibility	-- demonstrate respect and empathy for others in their communications -- take responsibility for completing assignments that avoid plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty
Values 2 - Civic Responsibility	-- understand the roles of communication in their academic, professional, and civic lives -- seek to use communication skills to participate in all three spheres	

**Courses to meet the Area of Mathematics:**

Courses in this area focus on teaching students the concepts and methodologies, findings and applications of mathematics while developing their inquiry and analysis skills. All courses in this area also address quantitative reasoning, critical thinking, problem-solving, and a commitment to ethical behavior.

Curriculum Area	Educational Goals	Learning Objectives -- Students should:
Mathematics	Skills 1 - Communication	-- be able to argue for or against the mathematical "reasonableness" of a statement that is presented as being implied by data -- be able to create and interpret graphs
	Skills 2 – Critical Thinking, Quantitative Reasoning, and Solving Problems Individually and Collaboratively	-- develop abstract reasoning ability—including the ability to write a coherent logical mathematical argument -- be able to analyze and solve mathematical models -- be able to interpret and analyze answers and solutions. -- develop quantitative reasoning ability -- be able to examine relationships among different quantities -- be able to analyze "real world" problems and develop mathematical models -- be able to analyze and solve mathematical models -- be able to analyze and interpret data
	Knowledge 1 – Concepts, Methodologies, Findings, and Applications of Mathematics	-- understand the structure of mathematics and mathematical reasoning -- understand functions and how they describe a relationship among quantities -- be competent in fundamental mathematics/algebraic operations
	Values 1–Ethical Behavior and Personal Responsibility	-- demonstrate respect and empathy for others in their communications -- take responsibility for completing assignments that avoid plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty



**Courses to meet the Area of Science:**

**Courses in this area** focus on teaching students the concepts and methodologies, findings and applications of science while developing their inquiry and analysis skills. All courses in this area explore the physical world using the scientific method applying quantitative reasoning, critical thinking, problem-solving, information technology, and a commitment to ethical behavior. All courses must include a lecture and laboratory.

Curriculum Area	Educational Goals	Learning Objectives Students should:
Science	Skills 1 – Communication	-- be able to communicate the process, results and conclusions resulting from the application of the scientific method
	Skills 2 – Critical Thinking, Quantitative Reasoning, and Solving Problems Individually and Collaboratively	-- develop skills in data collection, analysis, interpretation, drawing conclusions as they apply the scientific method to explore a problem to the point of testing a hypothesis to formulate a conclusion -- develop critical thinking skills and skills in experimental design
	Skills 3 – Information Technology	-- be able to use information resources like the internet to locate, retrieve, evaluate and synthesize scientific information and data -- be able to use word-processing, presentation software, and other technologies to compose texts and presentations
	Knowledge 1 – Concepts, Methodologies, Findings, and Applications of Natural Sciences, Engineering and Technology	-- understand the strengths and limitations of science. -- understand how scientists learn about the world through observation and experimentation, through modeling and interpretation, and through the skeptical scrutiny of the work of other experts in the field
	Values 1 – Ethical Behavior and Personal Responsibility	-- demonstrate respect and empathy for others in their communications -- take responsibility for completing assignments that avoid plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty

**Courses to Meet the Area of Fine Arts:**

**Courses in this area** offer a broad overview of one or more art forms, with options for some more precise focus. They focus on the appreciation and analysis of creative artifacts; involve the synthesis and interpretation of artistic expression; and enable critical and creative communication about works of art, with some attention to international aspects of the arts. These courses place an assessed emphasis on response to arts experience both on-campus and in the community.

In addition to the knowledge domain of the arts, these courses address communication, critical thinking, information technology, ethical and personal responsibility, civic responsibility, and global and cultural understanding.

Curriculum Area	Educational Goals	Learning Objectives Students should:
Fine Arts	Knowledge 2 – Concepts, Methodologies, and the Global Heritage of the Arts	-- demonstrate an informed acquaintance with exemplary works of art from a variety of cultures and historical periods -- explain a method used for artistic expression in a particular art discipline -- explain a method used to analyze art works in a particular art discipline
	Skills 1 – Communication  Skills 2 – Critical Thinking	-- explain, orally and in writing, their reactions to works of art, using appropriate arts terminology -- develop and present basic critical analyses of works of art -- relate (i.e., mix and match, compare and contrast) competencies of art-making, history and culture within an art discipline in order to arrive at a well-grounded understanding of the nature, value, and meaning of the arts
	Skills 3 – Information Technology	-- use information resources, including Internet resources, reflectively and ethically for inquiry, exploration, and communication. -- assess the reliability and relevance of information resources
	Values 1 – Ethical and Personal Responsibility	-- take responsibility for completing assignments that avoid plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty.
	Values 2 – Civic Responsibility	-- explain the place of the arts in developing a sense of civic community
	Value 3 – Global and Cultural Understanding	[In addition to the study of diverse cultural art production as mentioned in the first block]: -- explain the importance of understanding the experiences of a broad and diverse range of people as expressed in the artistic products studied by the arts disciplines -- respect diverse viewpoints about the meanings and values of works of art



**Courses to Meet the Area of Humanities:**

**Courses in this area** focus on the examination and interpretation of human thought and experience. These courses employ humanistic inquiry, a focused attention on interpreting a broad survey of textual and intellectual artifacts produced by individuals and groups, in order to interrogate human experience as well as the meanings and values that individuals and cultures assign to it.

In addition to the knowledge domain of the humanities, these courses address communication, critical thinking, information technology, ethical and personal responsibility, civic responsibility, and global and cultural understanding.

Curriculum Area	Educational Goals	Learning Objectives Students should:
Humanities	Knowledge 2 – Concepts, Methodologies, and the Global Heritage of the Humanities	-- demonstrate a general understanding of foundational concepts in the humanistic discipline -- be able to explain at least one method used for humanistic inquiry in a particular discipline -- demonstrate understanding of cultural and historical context as it informs humanistic texts
	Skills 1 – Communication	-- be able to describe and evaluate texts, using primary and secondary materials (in oral and written work).-- be able to assess, analyze, and synthesize the views, theories, judgments, and beliefs of texts
	Skills 2 – Critical Thinking	-- be able to reason and reflect through the gathering and interpretation of relevant information -- be able to explore their own identity within prior and current intellectual, aesthetic, and cultural frameworks
	Skills 3 – Information Technology	-- be able to use information resources, including Internet resources, reflectively and ethically for inquiry, exploration, and communication --be able to assess the reliability and relevance of information
	Values 1 – Personal Responsibility and Ethical Behavior	-- be able to discuss ethical implications of the meanings and values assigned to human experiences by producers of aesthetic or intellectual texts and by interpreters of those texts -- be able to explain the decision-making process for ethical interpretation of human experience as portrayed in aesthetic or intellectual texts -- take responsibility for completing assignments that avoid plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty
	Values 2 – Civic responsibility	-- be able to articulate the use of a humanistic perspective in developing a sense of civic responsibility
Values 3 – Global and Cultural Understanding	-- be able to explain the importance of understanding the experiences of a broad and diverse range of people as expressed in the cultural artifacts studied by the humanities. -- demonstrate respect for diverse viewpoints about the meanings and values of the human condition	

**Courses to Meet the Area of Other Social Sciences**

**Courses in this area** address broad areas of individual and/or group behavior. They also focus on the application of theoretical perspectives to individual and/or group behavior and emphasize how scientific methods are applied to understanding individual and/or group behavior.

In addition to the knowledge domain of the social sciences, these courses address communication, critical thinking, information technology, ethical and personal responsibility, civic responsibility, and global and cultural understanding.

Curriculum Area	Educational Goals	Learning Objectives Students should:
Other Social Sciences	Knowledge 1 – Concepts, Methodologies, Findings, and Applications of Social Sciences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-- have an informed acquaintance with general theories in the field of study</li> <li>-- be able to explain a how scientific methods are used in producing social scientific knowledge</li> <li>-- be able to explain how social scientific knowledge is/can be used in program or policy development</li> </ul>
	Skills 2 – Critical Thinking, Quantitative Reasoning, and Solving Problems Individually and Collaboratively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-- be able to compare and weigh the insights of theoretical perspectives</li> <li>-- be able to compare and weigh the benefits and drawbacks of various methods of inquiry</li> <li>-- be able to assess knowledge claims with evidence.</li> <li>-- be cognizant of personal biases</li> <li>-- be open-minded and willing to reconsider</li> </ul>
	Skills 3 – Information Technology	--be able to locate, retrieve, and use relevant data and/or other information
	Values 1 – Personal Responsibility and Ethical Behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-- take responsibility for completing coursework</li> <li>-- avoid plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty</li> <li>-- interact respectfully with various points of view during class discussions</li> </ul>
	Values 2 – Civic responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-- be able to explain ethical issues associated with social science research</li> <li>-- be able to apply ethical insights to various research designs</li> </ul>
	Values 3 – Global and Cultural Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-- be able to articulate an understanding of how social context matters in the production and/or application of social scientific knowledge</li> <li>-- be able to understand and articulate points of view that differ from one’s own</li> </ul>
	Skills 1 – Communication	--be able to demonstrate the above outcomes in oral and/or written form