

Core Curriculum Council Meeting Notes

Date: April 2, 2009, 2 p.m.-5:05 p.m.

<p>Present</p> <p><i>Dr. James Palmer Dr. Tonya Scott Dr. Natali Hritonenko</i> <i>Dr. Alphonso Keaton Dr. Antonio Jocson Tony Adam for Phelps, Data Team</i> <i>Dr. Gloria Regisford Dr. Michael Nojeim Dr. Harry Adams</i></p>	<p>Absent</p> <p><i>Dr. Kenyatta Phelps</i></p>
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AGENDA ITEM	DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION
<p>I. Call to Order and Introductions; Review of Outcomes Schematic</p>	<p>After welcome and introductions, Dr. Palmer gave an overview of the Council's purpose and immediate tasks. Committee examined the "Degree Program Outcomes Schematic" and noted need for the development of another measure to assess core curriculum outcomes as indicated on the schematic. He explained the need to identify a committee member from Visual and Performing Arts area before next meeting.</p>

AGENDA ITEM	DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION
<p>II. Exercise: The Fives and an examination of AAC&U Outcomes</p>	<p>Using Jerry Gaff's "The Fives" activity for generating discussion about general education (referred to as the Core Curriculum at PVAMU), the committee answered five questions, giving five answers for each question. The 5 ideas or skills the committee wanted students to learn varied by member, but common threads emerged. Sample lists included, but weren't limited to:</p> <p>Scott: proficiency in technology; reading skills; writing ability, T. Adam: economic theory, moral judgment, ability to argue both sides of issue H. Adams: writing, knowledge of American history and government, science, cultural awareness Palmer: ability to communicate effectively; critical thinking and analysis, ability to work with diverse populations Nojeim: math and logic, ability to follow directions Jocson: critical thinking, writing and reading, speaking, aesthetic appreciation Hritonenko: speaking and writing ability, worldly, ability to adjust to changing work environments, ability to fashion self as a new person of science, work with</p>

	<p>teams, etc.</p> <p>All members gave their answers to the following items, and common answers were as follows:</p> <p>1) List the 5 persons (living or dead) you want students to know: MLK, Gandhi, Lincoln, FDR, Dubois; etc.</p> <p>2) List the 5 places you would like student to visit: Answers more varied: Washington D.C., Theater, Museum, Cairo, Website: New York Times, factory, prison, etc.</p> <p>3) List the 5 books students should read: Answers varied: Bible, text by Darwin, Miseducation of Negro, texts from Plato, Dreams of My Father, collection of poems on L.A. Life, texts on art, history, poetry, war text, etc.</p> <p>4) List the 5 films/performances you would like students to see: The Corporation (on ethics); Malcolm X, Musical 1776, Matrix, Battle of Algiers, etc.</p> <p>Committee then discussed answers in light of the list of 5's from first question and noted common responses, especially as justifications for including certain texts, films, and people were given. Most important abilities and skills to surface in conversations were: 1) critical thinking in part through an ability to read closely, 2) effective communication, especially in written form, and 3) ability to work with multiple perspectives/cultures (ability to have a global perspective)</p> <p>Palmer gave list from AAC&U in packet of materials; committee noted similarities among our common list and across responses give to "The Fives." Committee noted that these common responses would help narrow down outcomes for assessment and measure being developed by committee.</p>
<p>III. Review of PVAMU's Core; THECB Outcomes; SACS and THECB Requirements</p>	<p>Palmer examined with the committee materials from the packet, including the outcomes given by THECB. Each member was given time to review all outcomes and to select what s/he felt was the single most important outcome in each core area, from communications to computing. Outcomes receiving the most votes:</p>

Communications:

f. "To understand and apply basic principles of critical thinking, problem solving, and technical proficient in the development of exposition and argument

Mathematics:

b. "to represent and evaluate basic mathematical information numerically, graphically, and analytically

Natural Science:

e. "to demonstrate knowledge of the interdependence of science and technology and their influence on , and contribution to, modern culture

Humanities and Fine Arts:

g. "to demonstrate knowledge of the influence of literature, philosophy, and/or the arts on cross-cultural interactions

Social and Behavioral Science (answers were far more varied here; the outcome with only two votes was selected):

c. "to analyze, critically assess, and develop creative solutions to public policy problems"

Computing:

b. to publish a document which incorporates appropriate design and uses standard formatting tools (tabs, margins, etc.)

Committee reviewed SACS 2.7.3 and 3.5.1 and THECB 5.404 requirements in packet.

<p>IV. Review of 2004 THECB Report and Assessment Plan and Timeline and Departmental Lower-level and Upper-level Core Alignment Matrix</p>	<p>Palmer examined with the committee THECB plans and matrices as an assessment overview and method for identifying courses that teach, integrate, and reinforce general education outcomes at PVAMU. Each committee member shared what their department was doing to assess core curriculum outcomes.</p>
<p>V. Data Review: CIRP 2006, UC and DE data; MAPP 2006</p>	<p>Committee reviewed all data assembled in packet. Of particular interest to the committee was the data from the CIRP that indicated students' self rating as "above average" or "highest 10%" as compared to average student. Committee noted: Writing Ability at 51.4 at PVAMU compared with 39.8 at all other 4-Yr Colleges; and Academic Ability at 59.0 compared to 52.3. This data was compared with direct measures from MAPP for reading, writing, and critical thinking. Critical Thinking levels for seniors were low, with only 7% of students proficient at level 3. Student's self-awareness should be fostered by the general education curriculum.</p>
<p>VI. General Education Assessment Levels, Strengths and Weaknesses; Return to "The Five"</p>	<p>Palmer led the committee through strengths and weaknesses of course-level, program-level, and institutional-level assessment of GE through materials from Mary Allen and noted that MAPP and CLA were institutional-level assessments that require central coordination and effective sharing of data. These devices are easier to monitor, but may not be the best method of assessing students at universities with special missions. As noted on the Outcome Schematic discussed earlier in the meeting, another measure needs to be developed to assess those outcomes we identified in the "Fives" activity and subsequent discussion.</p>
<p>VII. Discussion of Measure; Sample Prompts; Sample Rubrics</p>	<p>There was a great deal of discussion of the rubric from Northeastern Illinois University used to assess Critical Thinking. The committee examined and attempted an alignment between the element "Critical Thinking" on the current PVAMU ENGL 1123 rubric and those on the Northeastern Illinois rubric. Regisford noted that critical thinking hinged on interpretive skills; Adams noted that the ability to acknowledge other perspectives, need to address students' ability to demonstrate deductive and inductive reasoning, and the lack of an element assessing student ability to identify logical fallacies, etc. T. Adam discussed the MAPP writing section and noted that the measure we were discussing and designing was very similar to that from that exam. Discussion turned to whether the university should simply use the MAPP writing instrument rather than develop one. After much debate, the committee came to a contemporary topic that brought together many disciplines of the core and that could</p>

	<p>be used to assess those outcomes noted earlier. Keaton and others lead the conversation toward the issue of universal healthcare. It was agreed that we would work through a prompt on universal health care with multiple perspectives on the issue. Faculty eventually agreed that a writing task could be designed to be completed by students in a 50-minute timed environment and that if embedded into selected courses, especially at the 400-level, students would feel that the device was important to the university. If we relied only on the MAPP writing exam, we may not have students take the test well because of its low-stakes nature (i.e. it's not tied to a course, graduation, any requirements, etc.).</p>
<p>VIII. Assignments (due to Palmer by email by 12 p.m. on Monday, April 6, 2009)</p>	<p>Members were assigned perspectives/roles for the prompt: T. Adam: Hospital Administrator Palmer: Religious Official H. Adams: Politician Regisford: Insurance Agent Keaton: Physician Jocson: Patient Scott: Patient Hritonenko: Data Table on expenses; tax rates; cost of living; counties, etc. Nojeim: to be assigned task next week</p>
<p>IX. Next Meeting Wednesday, April 8, 2009 1-3 p.m. JJ Room 261</p>	<p>Members agreed to meet on Wednesday, April 8th, from 1-3 p.m.</p>
<p>X. Post-meeting Gathering</p>	<p>Several members remained after the meeting for further discussion until 5:45 p.m. The nature of the prompt was discussed, and Scott explained the nature of writing prompts used by ETS for the AP Composition exam. Several examples were examined by Scott, Palmer, and Jocson. More information will be gathered for Wednesday's meeting by these three members.</p>

Core Curriculum Council Meeting Notes

Date: April 8, 2009, 1 p.m.-3 p.m.

Present <i>Dr. James Palmer Dr. Tonya Scott Dr. Natali Hritonenko</i> <i>Dr. Alphonso Keaton Dr. Antonio Jocson Tony Adam, Data Team</i> <i>Dr. Gloria Regisford Dr. Michael Nojeim Dr. Harry Adams</i> <i>Dr. Kenyatta Phelps</i>		Absent
AGENDA ITEM	DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION	
I. Call to Order and Review of Minutes from April 2, 2009	Minutes were reviewed; tasks from the previous week were summarized.	

AGENDA ITEM	DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION
II. Finalize Assessment Prompt	<p>All assignments from the previous week were compiled and distributed to members along with a working prompt modeled after the AP Composition Exam. Materials compiled by members of the committee included selections from speeches, scholarly articles, original narratives prepared from the perspectives of a senator, minister, physician, patient, insurance agent, and hospital administrator, along with statistics showing proposed costs of universal health care. Other genres included visuals and graphs. The committee examined each reference one by one, noting places of overlapping perspectives, lack of enough sources against universal health care, and the need to make the exam manageable to complete in a 50-minute period. The committee decided to delete the narrative of the senator in favor of a speech given by Senator Obama in 2008; to eliminate the minister and patients since these overlapped or duplicated perspectives in other sources, but to keep narratives from the physician and insurance agent. Discussion centered on ensuring students would need to read through sources to select those to incorporate in their work, so the pros and cons given by the physician were eliminated because these could be used as summative statements by students, which could give a higher than earned rating on reading and ability to synthesize information. Though the image used as Source D is offensive, all members agreed that it should be used and that some sources needed to provoke strong</p>

	<p>responses. Once the sources were selected, the committee revisited each one, eliminating further repetition. Discussion turned to whether some sources needed to address a middle ground on the argument and whether to maintain some ambiguity in the sources. The committee suggested that a table with proposed costs from more perspectives than we had collected at that point needed to be added. Students might then notice that Obama's figures were far removed from those of Economist Len Nichols, More stats will be found.</p>
<p>III. Selection of 4000-level Course for Implementation</p>	<p>Once the assignment, prompt, and sources were finalized, discussion revolved around implementation of the assessment device. A list of all 4000-level courses offered this semester was reviewed. Phelps noted that to ensure randomness, a computer generated list should be used. Adam, Hritonenko, and Phelps discussed ways to ensure randomness, and Adams, Keaton, Palmer, and Nojeim asked for more details. After lengthy discussion, the committee agreed that Phelps should help randomly select two courses from each college, given the following parameters: 1) two courses from each college; 2) courses with between 20-30 students enrolled; 3) and avoidance of e-courses for this first year of implementation. Committee agreed that a random sampling of about 60-70 artifacts would then be taken from the samples gathered for evaluation using a rubric.</p>
<p>IV. Rubric Design</p>	<p>The committee examined several rubrics distributed the previous week and after some intense but quick discussion, the committee decided to use a 4-point scale and a 4-tiered rubric. Discussion of inter-rater reliability ensued. We examined the minutes from the previous meeting to come to those skills/abilities and outcomes that we decided were most important for core mastery. These were critical thinking, reading, writing, and ability to understand multiple perspectives. These will become the elements assessed and incorporated into the rubric. The committee decided to go with words such as 'proficient' rather than 'mastery' on the rubric since there are various levels of proficiency. It was decided that students should show proficiency in areas assessed at a 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. Members then divided into teams to design elements on the rubric.</p>
<p>V. Assignments (due to Palmer by email by 10 a.m. on Wednesday, April 15th) for next meeting</p>	<p>Critical Thinking and Reading Element(s): Adams, Keaton, Adam Writing Element(s): Scott, Nojeim, Regisford Multiple Perspectives: Jocson, Palmer, Hritonenko</p> <p>Revision of Prompt and Merging of Personal Narratives: Palmer Scholarly Journal Selection: Scott Facts and Dollar Figures for Table: Nojeim, Jocson</p> <p>Contact Identified Committee Members from Computing and Visual Arts: Palmer</p>
<p>VI. Next Meeting</p>	<p>Meeting time agreed upon by all members.</p>

Wednesday, April 15, 2009 1-3 p.m. JJ Room 261	
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Core Curriculum Council Minutes
Date: April 15, 2009, 1 p.m.-3 p.m.

Present <i>Dr. James Palmer Dr. Tonya Scott Dr. Natali Hritonenko</i> <i>Dr. Alphonso Keaton Dr. Antonio Jocson Tony Adam, Data Team</i> <i>Dr. Michael Nojeim Dr. Harry Adams Dr. Kenyatta Phelps</i>		Absent <i>Dr. Gloria Regisford</i>
Invited or Others Present <i>Dr. Charles Bailey, Core Team</i>		
AGENDA ITEM	DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION	
I. Call to Order and Review of Minutes from April 8, 2009	Minutes were reviewed; tasks from the previous week were summarized.	
II. Discuss CLA Exams	<p>Phelps gave the committee an update on current CLA assessments taking place this week for selected graduating seniors. The Committee examined a sample student letter. The turnout for the exam has been low for several reasons: the report generated of selected students was given late, letters given to instructors that identify students selected were sent out the week before; the University closure on April 10, 2009, delayed receipts of letters, and incentives weren't announced heavily. The incentives for taking the exam (cap and gown) may not attract as many students as desired because many have already purchased these items for the ceremony in May. Other ideas included a framed diploma. Nojeim mentioned that Texas Tech offered iPods as incentives. Phelps explained that we may get as many as fifteen students by COB on Thursday, but the target was about fifty. This has been a learning process for all of us, and we should have larger numbers take the MAPP in the next few weeks. The Committee admitted that three devices in the same month meant that some students would be called on more than once for assessment, but that this was unavoidable, and that, given all that we have learned about the process over the past year, a solid plan would result essentially eliminating overlapping assessment. The importance of the Core Curriculum Committee's efforts at creating its own device was affirmed, given the low number of students participating CLA.</p>	

<p>III. Discuss on Need for Reporting on Core Assessment</p>	<p>Discussion turned from the CLA and the results that would be gathered from it to the need to gather information from units across campus about the THECB Core Exemplary Objectives. Much has been done by units, but requiring another set of Report Forms A-1 was thought to be overwhelming since PLO reports are still undergoing revision until May 10, 2009. Palmer explained that as he visited with Departments across campus, he noticed that quite a few had assessed Core Curriculum courses but that the data gathered and used was not necessarily used on PLO reports. Nojeim initially expressed that another report would be difficult to accomplish for units, especially as units need to move into Strategic Planning and reports. Adam, Palmer, and Scott mentioned that many units have already gathered the data and have used it and that, in fact, many units may have reported it on their PLO reports. Adam noted that we shouldn't limit requests for information to those units that teach the core curriculum, since all units reinforce the objectives somehow. Nojeim noted that one of his PLO is directly aligned with the Exemplary Objectives given and that these had been aligned already in True Outcomes. After considerable discussion, the Committee agreed to recommend the Provost and the Core Team that Academic Units across campus be asked to report on at least one Exemplary Objective of their choice, since no single unit is responsible for all Objectives. Data regarding mastery of the Objectives could (and perhaps should) come from upper-level courses, but Units could report the data and information that they had. Scott mentioned that the Committee should create several sample forms as examples before sending out any type of request and all members agreed. Palmer would make the recommendation known to the Core Team at the next meeting on April 16, 2009.</p>
<p>IV. Review Assessment Device and Rubric</p>	<p>The Committee again reviewed the assignment, prompt, and sources gathered for the assessment device developed over the past several weeks. Palmer mentioned that he piloted the exam with two volunteer students; he shared their responses on each source and the challenges they faced. The length of time for the exam was discussed at length, but the two students were able to complete the task in the 50 minute period given. Scott mentioned the need to give a suggested timeline: Reading of Sources 10-15 minutes; Pre-writing: 5 minutes; Writing: 30-minutes. Source B of the packet was examined in some detail; Adams, Nojeim, and Keaton noted that this source was "vacuous"; and members voted to delete it and to find one that gave more facts and figures. Adams was given this task. Jocson noted that bibliographic information for two sources he found would be supplied. Source E also was discussed heavily. It was ultimately deleted because of the lack of context given in the chart explaining the data sources (Institute of Medicine, Economist Len Nichols, and the Brookings Institute) and their biases. The dollar amounts given were difficult to use without more context and the discussion returned to whether to re-incorporate the data gathered about life expectancies by Hritonenko. Nojeim volunteered to create a new chart giving data by country that argued for universal healthcare but that could also be ambiguous if compared with other</p>

	<p>sources we agreed to incorporate.</p> <p>Discussion then turned to the rubric designed over the past week in sub-committees. Bailey noted the need to have percentages or specific numbers to distinguish categories such as Highly Proficient from Proficient. Adam, Palmer, Adams, and Jocson noted the difficulty of doing so for the items being measured, but all agreed to attempt to do so for the next revision due next week. The Committee agreed to replace the word "valid" with the word "sound" throughout the rubric. Adams and others noted overlap in element 4, and the committee agreed to eliminate "ability to make sound inferences and draws reasonable to defensible conclusions" from the "Source Incorporation" element, originally named "Understanding". Palmer mentioned that designing the rubric would be even more difficult than designing the assignment because we would need it to be clearly aligned with our outcomes being assessed and be easy to use outside of our committee's context. Scott, Hritonenko, and others mentioned that students should have a rubric as part of the exam packet or that it could be given out before the day the exam was given. Assignments were then made.</p>
<p>V. Review Courses Selected for Assessment</p>	<p>Courses were reviewed; Bailey asked about the use of the word "random" selection and the committee explained that Phelps had designed a selection process by computer for two 4000-level courses per college with enrollment between 18 and 32 students being the only factors for selection. These courses should give a representative sampling of students. Palmer will design a letter and instructions for the instructors selected. It will explain the purpose of the assessment and that it would in no way affect course grades or graduation. The notification letter, assignment and copies for all students will be completed by COB Monday, April 20.</p>
<p>VI. Assignments (due to Palmer by email)</p>	<p>Palmer: Revisions to numbers on rubric, element names. Jocson, Palmer: Revisions to Elements 1, 2, and 5 (Interpretive Critical Thinking; Synthetic Critical Thinking; and Analysis) Scott, Adams: Revision to Elements 3 and 4 (Multiple Perspectives; Source Incorporation) Adam: Revisions to Element 6 and 7 (Writing/Organization) Keaton: Revisions to Element 7 (Sentence Construction)</p>
<p>VII. Next Meeting Set</p>	<p>Meeting time agreed upon by all members. Wednesday, April 22, 2009 1-3 p.m. JJ Room 261</p>