

A&S Core Curriculum Assessment Report

Academic Year 2022-2023



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September 2023

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview and Methods

This report provides an assessment of the unified core curriculum in the College of Arts & Sciences at Baylor University during the 2022-2023 academic year. The Core Assessment Plan, approved by the Core Curriculum Advisory Committee (CCAC), outlines a structure to assess seven different dimensions of the Core: student learning across and within the Core; faculty adherence to catalog-approved course requirements; faculty commitment and expertise; co-curricular adherence to catalog-approved requirements; diversity and inclusion efforts in Core courses; and a summary of key metrics of the core curriculum during the 2022-2023 academic year. The Core Vision Statement, alongside the catalog-approved objectives for each common course, distribution list, and co-curricular, guides the evaluation, presenting a snapshot of the Core in the fourth year of its implementation.

The report draws on existing methods used at Baylor to assess general education outcomes and collect student feedback. These methods include collecting and analyzing data from the departments of Religion and Political Science – used by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) and the General Education Assessment Committee (GEAC) – as well as data gathered from Institutional Research (IR) student surveys such as the New2BU survey and Baylor Senior Student Survey. Additionally, A&S used a self-reported teacher of record (TOR) assessment of syllabi, a Shared Knowledge syllabus study of the five common core courses, and a departmental assessment—the Core Curriculum Assessment Report on Learning Outcomes (CARLO). Finally, A&S uses a Core Curriculum Dashboard created by IR that contains course data and faculty demographic information, a Chapel report from IR, and data from the CAE event-hosting platform BaylorConnect. Future assessment is envisioned that will assess other aspects of the Core that are not currently captured by the existing measures.

Key Findings from 2022-2023 Core Assessment Data

1. Student learning across the core curriculum. The GEAC Report states that students “met” the “performance target” in the SLOPE assessment measurement for “Christian Perspective” and “Civic Engagement.” The Senior Survey and Enrolled Student Survey indicate that students found that core courses contributed more to their “Christian Perspective” than “courses in your major” or in “co-curricular academic work.”
2. Student learning within the core curriculum. While not all requested CARLOs were completed, the departmental assessment plans created are in place for most of the targeted courses in this assessment cycle.
3. Adherence to approved course requirements and CCAC guidelines. 50% of TORs complied with this request. Based on the self-reporting of the TORs, the course objectives for the targeted courses are being noted in the syllabus or are being pursued in the course at a very high rate (i.e., above 90%). Based on the study of the syllabi of the common courses, common knowledge is being taught in 3 of the 5 common courses.
4. Faculty commitment and expertise is rated high based on these data. Still, there is room for improvement here. While faculty of all ranks teach in the core, nearly 40% of the TORs were graduate students or temporary lecturers. This may be a marker that needs careful monitoring, particularly in some departments that employ higher numbers of adjuncts.
5. Co-curricular adherence to CCAC guidelines and course requirements. No assessment of CAE, Chapel, or Civic Engagement was completed, but a metrics report is provided for CAE and Chapel.
6. Diversity and inclusion efforts in Core. The approved official documents of the A&S Core Curriculum include diversity requirements within various elements of the Core. Syllabus assessments provide strong evidence that D&I elements were included in lectures, readings, and other class activities in almost all sections that were studied. The syllabi of 2 of the 5 common core courses include substantial D&I elements.
7. Summary of key metrics. The results indicate that after four years, the unified core curriculum is nearing full implementation. One distribution list is not fully populated, and one new distribution list has been added, active in Fall 2024.

Key Recommendations for the 2023-2024 Academic Year

The findings present in the GEAC Report on Christian Perspective and Civic Engagement, CARLO Assessment Report, Syllabi Self-Assessment Report, “A Shared Foundation of Knowledge” Report, and the Core Metrics Report provide meaningful information and assist the Office of the Core in having a clearer sense of where to focus future assessments to help develop a continuous plan of improvement. Here are summarized recommendations on the next steps based on findings from each of the subsequent Core Curriculum Assessment sections:

1. **Student learning across the core curriculum:** Since the GEAC SLOPE does not fully capture the attainment of the “Christian Perspective” and “Civic Engagement” across the core, the Director of the Core will continue to explore ways that the University can assist A&S in evaluating learning across the core in these and other areas. The Office of the Core will continue to consider the creation of a Core Curriculum Survey or other means of assessment to address the five learning across the core curriculum elements: Christian Tradition, Civic Engagement, Creativity, Critical Reasoning, and Scientific Method. Currently, the University assessment measures only address Christian Tradition (as “Christian Perspective”), Civic Engagement, and Critical Reasoning.
2. **Student learning within the core curriculum:** The Office of the Core will work closely with departments that did not submit CARLOs for their targeted courses over the coming years. The importance of departmental assessment plans will be clearly articulated.
3. **Adherence to official Core documents and CCAC guidelines:** Starting next year (2023-24), only TORs who have not completed their SSAs for their targeted courses will be asked to complete one.
4. **Faculty commitment and expertise:** Work with the Dean and department chairs to reduce the number of adjuncts teaching core courses.
5. **Co-curricular adherence to CCAC guidelines and course requirements:** Work with the Directors of Chapel and the CAE to develop assessment models for Chapel and CAE, and work with the Office of Engaged Learning to develop an assessment model for the newly approved Engaged Learning Distribution List that will become active in Fall 2024. NOTE: the Civic Engagement component of the core is moving to the new Engaged Learning Distribution List and will be removed from the co-curricular list.
6. **Diversity and inclusion efforts in Core:** Work with the newly appointed Associate Dean for Diversity and Belonging to develop new ways of assessing D&I elements of the core.
7. **Tracking Data and Metrics in the Core:** Include the four-year graduation rate as a metric to track.