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# Report of the Core Curriculum Task Force

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# Report of the Core Curriculum Task Force

**January 4, 2005**

*Now amended by Faculty Assembly actions*

*Note: The University Curriculum Committee moved “to approve the core curriculum framework, as outlined in sections 2 through 6 of the CCTF Final Report.” There were seven successful amendments passed by the Faculty Assembly at meetings in March and April 2005. I have shown the precise amendments to Sections 4, 5, and 6 in underlined, blue font. I have also made changes to the Table of Contents and elsewhere to reflect changes in the names of elements of the Core. I have not gone through the rationale and general discussion sections to reflect the changes implied by the passage of amendments. Rather, I have inserted notes prior to discussions that are impacted significantly by the successful amendments.*

*Bill Templeton*

*Faculty Assembly Chair*

*May 2, 2005*

*(Additional errors corrected on June 1, 2005 in order to conform to text of amendments actually approved by Faculty Assembly.)*

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# 1 About this Document

This document represents the final report of the Core Curriculum Task Force that was constituted in January 2004. We have gone through a long process involving many meetings, frequent consultations with the faculty and repeated iterations of draft documents. We are grateful to the individuals and groups of faculty members who have given of their time to attend meetings and offer us written commentary on our drafts. At this point, we believe the task of our group is reaching an end. It is time for the faculty to review our recommendations, and if, as we hope, it accepts them, to begin the long and hard work of making these proposals a reality.

While our report is substantial, it remains by design a skeletal document. What we have presented here is chiefly a framework of curricular requirements defined by learning objectives. The core curriculum at this institution must ultimately belong to the faculty who commit their energies to teaching in it, and so it is absolutely essential that they take the lead in making this framework a reality. The framework is a necessary first step, for without it, there is no organizing principle to show faculty where they may direct their efforts. But ultimately, as with any curricular proposal, the success of this reform will depend not so much on what this task force has done now, but on what the faculty of the university does in the years ahead.

As we embark on this next chapter of core reform, we think we all should attend to a lesson that we try to teach our students in our current core curriculum: the most vibrant cultures thrive by embracing both change and tradition. In the end we believe the continued vibrancy of Butler's educational culture depends upon our commitment to rethinking our existing ways of teaching and being open to change while at the same time embracing our successful traditions.

## 2 Implementation Goals

### 2.1 *A Core Curriculum*

Our proposal suggests that we continue to refer to our general education program as the Butler University Core Curriculum. We have reviewed uses of the terms 'core curriculum' and 'general education' and we find that there is no uniformity of usage, though the term 'general education' currently has broader use nationally. The chief argument to move away from the terminology of 'core' is the view that true core education involves common experiences in which all students take the same courses.

We propose that we keep the term 'core curriculum' for several reasons:

- Our principle of limited choice and learning in community is in the spirit of a "true core"
- General education at Butler has traditionally been called the core curriculum

- The term “core” suggests to us the centrality of general education to Butler’s mission and to the education of our students.

## ***2.2 A Core Structured by Learning Objectives rather than Disciplines***

Our proposed core curriculum structures the core by learning objectives rather than by disciplinary or departmental boundaries. While disciplines provide important content and methodology to core courses, the introduction to a discipline as such is not a goal of our core education.

Our proposed core eliminates traditional divisional requirements and eliminates departmental designations (e.g., ‘AN’, ‘EN’, ‘MA’, etc.) from many core courses. The categories that we use to structure our core will sometimes correspond reasonably closely to divisional or departmental boundaries, but we intentionally do not *define* categories this way. The approach that defines categories based on learning objectives will, we hope, help to focus us as faculty on the actual goals of our teaching, to transcend our disciplinary and professional boundaries, and to escape issues of departmental and college politics.

In keeping with this principle, this document does not specify particular courses to be taught in the core. Should this core structure be adopted, the next step will be for faculty to propose courses (including some existing courses) for inclusion under various core categories.

## ***2.3 A Core that belongs to and is taught by the whole university community***

Butler University’s mission statement makes a commitment to “integrat[ing] the liberal arts with professional education.” We find, however, that the reality of our core education is that it has fallen short on the ideal of integration. The current core is, with the exception of PE and division 2, taught almost entirely by the faculty of LAS, and is generally seen as distinctly different from disciplinary and professional education.

The differences in faculty specializations and college missions dictate that the preponderance of core courses will continue to be taught by faculty in arts and sciences, but the mission of integration will be well served if we develop a core structure that encourages real and sustained teaching by many faculty in the professional colleges, and if the professional colleges have a voice in the ongoing administration of the core.

## ***2.4 Teaching and Learning in Community***

[Note: The amendments passed by the Faculty Assembly remove the First Year Seminar from the Limited Choice model.](#)

We endorse the claim in Butler’s mission statement that liberal education at Butler ought to proceed by “creating and fostering a stimulating intellectual community built upon interactive dialogue and inquiry among faculty, staff and students.” We think, however, that our current approach to core education could do better at such community building.

Our mission statement, the president's strategic plan and the task force's own statement all strongly endorse the fostering of our students' capacity to live in community, but truthfully we do not always model this capacity in the delivery of the core. Too often, requirements are seen to be the responsibility of particular departments, and courses the province of particular individuals. There is, in our view, too little collaborative teaching in the core.

Our proposed core seeks to build communities in a variety of ways. Perhaps most obviously we endorse a model of limited choice for the central requirements in our core. In this model, described in more detail in section four, students choose from a limited choice of multi-section courses, where there is sufficient commonality and collaboration across sections to create a learning community of teachers and students that extends beyond the individual classroom.

We also build community by a variety of moves which foster the integration of the core with the broader activities of the University. We seek to increase participation of faculty from across the University in core teaching while moving away from a model in which much of the core is delivered by "core-only" contract and adjunct faculty. We have added a junior-senior core capstone that will bring students deep within their majors back into the core. We seek to integrate basic liberal education skills with the work of the major in the writing and speaking across the curriculum requirement. We propose a Butler cultural community requirement and an Indianapolis community requirement that each will move students into communities beyond the narrow confines of their classrooms.

In our statement of principles we have emphasized that core content should focus on understanding the multifaceted relationship between self and community. While we call for an intellectual investigation of this relationship in our courses, a true understanding of it requires that the dynamics of self and community be explored not just through class work but through lived experiences. Our core design seeks to build communities which foster such experiences.

## ***2.5 A Core Taught in Small Classes by the Tenure-Stream Faculty of the University***

We do not believe that the core we propose in this report can be successfully fielded unless it is taught in small classes and largely by tenure-stream faculty. We need small classes in order to utilize the kind of active and engaged pedagogy that best fosters the basic capacities of the liberally educated person. Accordingly, we recommend that class sizes in the core curriculum be capped at 25, with a cap of 18 for students in the first year seminar.

We need our core to be taught largely by tenure stream faculty because many of the courses we propose will take a level of time and commitment from teachers that we can only expect of those to whom the University itself has made a long-term commitment.

Significant involvement of tenure-stream faculty will also increase the continuity of our core offerings over the years.

In this proposal we recommend a reduction of the core to 30 hours. We do this in large part because we believe it is a reasonable tradeoff to lose a few hours and gain smaller classes and a decreased reliance on contract faculty. But while we can accomplish some of our goals through this reduction, ultimately we will need more tenure-stream faculty to make this proposal a reality.

Currently 52% of core sections are taught by tenure-stream faculty. We recommend that we seek to increase this proportion to about 80% while at the same time decreasing class sizes. Such a number would put us at a level comparable to that of a number of quality institutions (e.g., the University of Richmond) with which we would like to be compared. At our request, the Provost's office has undertaken a study of the costs of reaching this target under the proposed core structure. The Provost estimates that we could make this target with the addition of around ten tenure-stream faculty. He has expressed confidence that this is a reasonable target that is consistent with the University's strategic plan and its fundraising priorities.

### **3 Overview of Core Structure**

Our core curriculum is divided into two parts – a relatively structured set of common core elements in which students have limited choices of courses and a looser set of general core elements in which students have a broader choice of courses within areas defined by specific learning objectives.

The common core elements are as follows:

1. The First Year Seminar: Self, Community and World (6 hours)
2. The Sophomore requirement: [Global and Historical Studies](#) (6 hours)
3. The Junior/Senior Capstone: [Topics in American and Global Society](#) (3 hours)

These elements represent the “core of the core” and are the elements of the curriculum that most clearly express our identity as an institution – as one university rather than five colleges.

The general core elements are as follows:

1. Texts and Ideas (3 hours)
2. The Social World (3 hours)
3. The Natural World (5 hours)
4. Perspectives in the Creative Arts (3 hours)
5. Analytic Reasoning (3 hours)
6. Physical Well Being (1 hour)

While these requirements are structurally similar to those in the existing core, we anticipate changes in how each element will be implemented.

In addition to the common and general core elements, we propose four other general graduation requirements.

1. The Writing Across the Curriculum Requirement
2. The Speaking Across the Curriculum Requirement
3. The Butler Cultural Community Requirement
4. The Indianapolis Community Requirement

While these requirements are not strictly part of the core curriculum, we believe that they are important parts of a plan to realize our principles for core education. In the core curriculum we aspire to engender capacities that will serve students in their other academic work and in their broader life. These requirements will ask students to strengthen and utilize these capacities in activities outside the core, and so to take steps towards integrating their core education with their life outside the classroom.

Students enrolled at the university who have completed a bachelor's degree at another accredited institution are exempted from all core requirements.

## 4 Common Core Elements

*Note: The amendments passed by the Faculty Assembly remove the First Year Seminar from the Limited Choice model.*

The three common elements – the first-year seminar, the sophomore Change & Tradition in the World requirement, and the junior/senior capstone course – provide the unifying structure of our core curriculum. While the requirements have different objectives, they have certain common features:

1. **Students will be offered a limited choice of courses.** In our earlier core proposal we argued that providing students and faculty a limited choice of courses would provide the appropriate trade-off between freedom to choose and shared educational experiences. For the common-element courses, we continue to endorse this principle.

We hope that a model of limited choice will combine the best aspects of truly common core courses and menu-style distribution requirements. Multi-section courses will create communities of teachers whose collaborative work will enrich each other and foster better and more consistent courses as well as communities of students whose shared experience will extend beyond their individual classrooms. By creating an array of such communities and keeping them small, faculty retain much of the freedom to teach in areas they know best and to maintain control over their content and pedagogy. These communities will also allow us to invite new and non-tenure stream faculty to collaborate with established teachers. Finally, the model affords students a real measure of freedom in their choices of courses. Thus, limited choice will provide a model for the combination of collaboration and autonomy that is characteristic of the best communities in which we live.



Exactly how limited the choices are, and what degree of commonality we expect, is something that will be different for each of the common elements, and something that we will have to explore more fully as we pilot courses in these areas.

2. **The requirements are interdisciplinary, or at least multidisciplinary.** Each of the common element requirements is designed to encourage participation from faculty across the University. While we would not preclude courses in these areas that have particular disciplinary content, no discipline should dominate these courses, and ideally these are courses where faculty from more than one discipline can teach collaboratively. To help signal and foster this approach, we recommend that these courses all be identified by a common rubric, ‘CC’.
3. **These requirements will in most cases have to be satisfied at Butler.** Because these courses do not correspond to courses taught at other universities or to high school courses for which students receive AP credit, we generally expect students to take these courses at Butler. We propose certain exceptions for transfer students, which are detailed in the descriptions below.

These courses represent the most ambitious part of our curricular proposal. They require large numbers of classes with largely new designs to be fielded cooperatively by faculty across the University. Accordingly, while we believe we are in a position to adopt this framework now, we recognize that the development of courses to satisfy these requirements is a process that will take time, resources and broad faculty involvement. We will need to pilot courses in these areas, and we will need to be prepared to make modifications to our approach in light of the experience of these pilots. We will also need to develop careful plans to phase in these complex requirements.

#### ***4.1 First Year Seminar: Self, Community and World (6 hours)***

**Course Structure:** A ~~limited choice of~~ two-semester sequences taken in the first year.

##### **Learning Objectives:**

1. To reflect on “big questions” about themselves, their community and their world.
2. To develop the capacity to read and think critically.
3. To develop the capacity to write clear and persuasive expository and argumentative essays, with an emphasis on thesis formation and development.
4. To ~~develop the capacity for effective oral communication~~ gain an understanding of basic principles of oral communication as they apply to discussion.
5. To understand the liberal arts as a vital and evolving tradition and to see themselves as agents within that tradition.

6. To develop capacities for careful and open reflection on questions of values and norms.
7. [To develop the ability to carry out research for the purpose of inquiry and to support claims.](#)

**Faculty:** This course will be taught by faculty from across the University with appropriate aptitudes for the teaching of writing. In practice, we expect most faculty teaching in this course to come from the humanities and social sciences.

**Exemptions:** All first year students will be required to take this course. (Students may of course use AP scores for elective credit.) Students entering the University with sophomore standing may substitute English composition plus a humanities or social science course (not being otherwise used for other core credit) for this course.

**Commentary:**

[\*Note: The amendments passed by the Faculty Assembly remove the First Year Seminar from the Limited Choice model.\*](#)

We envision this course as a signature program for the first year. We have deliberately called this a first year seminar instead of a writing seminar, for we think that while writing is an essential element of this program, this is more generally an introduction to the sort of active engagement with ideas of seriousness that is characteristic of the best university education

This year-long course replaces the EN102/ID103 sequence in our current core. We believe that we will strengthen our writing program and serve our goals of integrating writing into liberal education generally. Rather than just teaching writing as a separate skill, this model will encourage students to see writing as an essential intellectual activity in which one makes sense of oneself and one's world.

We believe it is crucial that the courses taught in this section embody the principle that faculty and students should teach and learn in community, and it is for this reason that the limited choice model is particularly appropriate. We envision this course being satisfied by a limited choice of courses devoted to broad and significant topics about self, community or world. The following are examples:

- Faith and doubt
- Justice, oppression and liberation
- Race, language and culture
- The sacred
- The birth of American identity
- Human nature and human culture

Many of the best features of our current freshman program arise from the enthusiasm instructors can bring to topics and texts of their own choosing, but we believe that the

faculty teaching in this area will, through a piloting process, be able to find an approach that increases commonality and community while still providing instructors liberty to teach in the ways they teach best. Because we believe these matters are best settled in the implementation phase, we will not speculate on how many choices of courses should be offered to students in this area or on the exact modes of commonality between sections of these courses. We would emphasize, however, that there must be enough commonality across sections to allow for students taking any section of the second semester of this course to build on the content and skills developed in the first semester. Additionally, there must be commonality across courses in terms of expectations concerning writing and other skill development.

In moving to a two-semester model we are also moving from a model where writing is taught in one semester by faculty from a single department to an interdisciplinary writing faculty. While we believe our academic training provides most instructors with the potential to be effective writing teachers, this potential must be fostered by faculty development and a well-developed set of expectations for the teaching of writing in this course. Students must learn habits of good writing, including drafting, self and peer review, editing and revision. They must also learn proper techniques for research and documentation of sources, along with other aspects of information literacy.

We also believe it should be an objective of this course to foster effective oral communication skills in our students. One part of this objective can be achieved by using a discussion-based pedagogy. In addition to this, however, we believe that the first year sequence should include some formally evaluated oral communications component. While we are sensitive to the limitations on classroom time and the dangers of trying to put too much in the first year, we believe that in the context of the year-long format, this requirement can be carried out in a way that is consistent with the other learning objectives and which is not onerous for students or instructors. Indeed, given the variety of sorts of oral assignments which could be used, we are confident instructors could use these assignments to further their content objectives. Appropriate use of the speaker's lab will minimize in-class time devoted to preparation for oral communication assignments. Details of how to productively address oral communications skills will have to be worked out in the piloting process.

The final learning objectives associated with this sequence concern liberal education and questions of value. While these objectives ought to inform our teaching across the curriculum, they deserve particular emphasis in the first year seminar. We should emphasize that we are not suggesting either inculcation of our particular values or formal introduction to theories of value. We simply wish for students to study texts and concepts that develop their sense of moral complexity and to be challenged to think seriously about how they should act in their world. This sort of "moral development" goes on frequently in our existing first year program, as well as in many other classes across the university.

#### 4.2 ~~Change and Tradition in the World~~ Global and Historical Studies (3 6 hours)

**Course Structure:** ~~One~~ Two courses taken in the second year, chosen from a limited choice of three-hour courses.

##### **Learning Objectives:**

1. To engage in investigation of and reflection about cultures different from their own, especially non-western cultures.
2. To explore these cultures using a variety of sources and disciplines – including the arts, literature, religion, philosophy, geography, anthropology, and social and political history.
3. To recognize both the value of and challenges raised by cultural diversity.
4. To continue development of skills of expository writing.

**Faculty:** This course will be taught by faculty from across the university, but predominantly by faculty in the humanities and social sciences.

**Exemptions:** None.

##### **Commentary:**

*Note: The following commentary does not reflect the change in the name of this element and the increase in required credit hours. No version of the current Change and Tradition course will be required in the new core, however the sponsors of the amendment argued: “The expanded title, ‘Global and Historical Studies’ allows that a version of our current Change and Tradition, (could) reside in a limited-choice menu of disciplinary and interdisciplinary courses designed to invite students to ‘engage in investigation of and reflection about cultures different from their own.’”*

In this final version of our report, we recommend the current six hour C&T requirement be replaced by a three hour requirement.<sup>1</sup> Change and Tradition has for many years been the signature program of our core curriculum, and it embodies many of the principles of general education that we most value. Nonetheless, we believe the benefits to the whole core of reducing this requirement to three hours outweigh the benefits of a six hour requirement. We would like to explain the grounds for our judgment.

Perhaps the most important reason to cut the hours to three is that we see no compelling case to be made that the learning objectives cannot be satisfied in a single semester. The most important goals of the C&T program are to introduce students to the sense of

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<sup>1</sup> Because about 25% of students currently are exempted from one semester of C&T, the reduction from six to three hours will reduce core hours for only about 75% of students.

strangeness that comes from encountering a culture very different from one's own and to introduce ways of thinking about different cultures that encompasses a broad range of sources and disciplines. While more time will allow students broader exposure, the basic work can be done in one semester.

The reduction in hours will have a number of beneficial effects on staffing patterns and will actually help increase the global and multi-cultural focus of our curriculum. By eliminating these hours we will free up a significant group of talented teachers in the core. These faculty members will have a number of opportunities to help shape new parts of our core curriculum where we hope to have a global emphasis. Certainly global themes will be important in the first year seminar and the capstone course. It will also likely be possible to carry much of the content of current C&T courses into courses which, depending on focus and methodology, might fit either in the Texts and Ideas or Social World areas.

More generally, the reduction of these hours serves our desire to create a smaller core. We are persuaded that it is worthwhile to trade a few hours in the core for a core that is taught in smaller classes and by a larger proportion of tenure stream faculty.

As in the rest of our common core elements, we believe that courses offered under this requirement should follow the principle of limited choice. There are a variety of models that faculty should consider. Perhaps the most obvious is to have something very much like the existing C&T, with students choosing to take either the fall or spring semester; but faculty members implementing this requirement should consider other approaches as well. These faculty members should also think more generally about the appropriate nature and limits of the common experience. We heard from a variety of sources, both among faculty and students, that sometimes the commonality of C&T was more an aspiration than a reality. As faculty rethink how to teach courses in this area they should think afresh about what sorts of models can allow commonality while making allowances for differences in the training and interests of faculty.

### ***4.3 The Junior/Senior Capstone: Topics in American and Global Society (3 hours)***

**Course Structure:** A limited choice of three-hour courses to be taken in the junior or senior year.

#### **Learning Objectives:**

1. To study in depth an issue in contemporary society from a variety of disciplinary perspectives.
2. To reflect on the interplay between conceptual, empirical and normative issues in understanding a complex societal issue.
3. To apply knowledge and skills developed in the core and in the student's major to an issue outside his or her normal field of study.

**Faculty:** Faculty from across the University.

Exemptions: None.

**Commentary:** This course represents the last piece of our proposed “core of the core.” Students should take it only after completing other core requirements and not before the junior year. It is aimed at two key elements of Butler’s mission – integrating liberal and professional education and making graduates engaged citizens of their local, national and global communities.

This course represents the most novel and ambitious change we propose within our curriculum. We have some definite ideas on how to implement this proposal, but we believe we must remain tentative on details of organization and staffing, leaving these to be worked out by subsequent groups of faculty who will actually pilot courses for this requirement.

In order to implement a limited choice model, we think the best thing to do would be for groups of faculty to identify a fairly broad topic or concentration within which to offer courses. Examples of topics might include

- Peace and the Environment
- Poverty
- Local, National and Global Perspectives on Health Care
- Education and the Arts
- The Global Economy

Within each concentration, a number of models might be adopted. (1) Instructors might construct courses based on largely or wholly common syllabi; (2) Instructors might teach different courses within the topic, but share common themes and perhaps some common texts; or (3) Groups of instructors might team teach in a variety of ways – for instance by creating shared lectures with broken out discussion sections, or by instructors shifting sections in mid semester.

All of these options need to be explored, but the key feature that we argue should be maintained is that there must be enough commonality of topic and approach that we create a community of students and faculty from a variety of disciplines, thinking on an issue from a diversity of perspectives.

Obviously developing courses within a topic or concentration would be time consuming, so we would hope to offer some topics repeatedly. At the same time, a coordinator for this program would have to encourage the development of new concentrations to meet the changing interests of students and faculty.

This is clearly an area where professional college faculty should play a key role. It is also an area where many courses could utilize service or community learning elements.

## 5 ~~General Core Requirements~~ Areas of Inquiry

In our revised proposal we augment the common elements of the core with general elements in which students can choose from a broader array of courses that have been designed to meet specific learning objectives. Five of these elements resemble to a significant degree the five divisions of the existing core curriculum. But while we acknowledge this similarity, we have deliberately eschewed the language of divisions, because we wish to emphasize that a categorization by learning objectives will not correspond exactly with any departmental, divisional or college boundaries. Ultimately, these different categories represent different ways and objects of knowing rather than different disciplinary affiliations.

~~In order to guarantee that courses are designed to serve the needs of the general education student, we recommend the elimination of core courses that either count towards or are a prerequisite for any academic major. While we recognize that in some instances the needs of core courses and introductory courses in the major coincide, this is not generally the case. Moreover, after reviewing data on enrollments in existing divisional courses, we are convinced that this change would not be overly costly. At the same time, we emphasize that we should only commit to this approach if the faculty have assurances from the administration that they are willing to absorb some costs that will arise in cases where the elimination of dual purpose courses creates smaller majors only classes.~~

In order to ensure that courses are designed to serve the needs of the general education student, we recommend that courses offered for core credit meet two important criteria: 1) they should carry no prerequisites, and 2) their primary purpose should not be to prepare students for more advanced work in a particular discipline. In addition, courses offered under the “Areas of Inquiry” requirement should be appropriate to freshmen and sophomores (i.e., they should be 100 and 200 level courses). Students may petition to count upper-level courses toward “Areas of Inquiry” requirements, and the process for making such petitions will be spelled out clearly in the University Bulletin, the schedule of classes, and other printed material describing the core curriculum.

We embrace disciplinary courses in these areas, but we wish to create opportunities for interdisciplinary and collaborative teaching as well. In our view, for instance, there is room in these areas for courses that cross disciplinary boundaries (e.g., gender studies, international studies, peace studies, and science, technology and society), and we encourage the faculty and administration to find ways to staff courses in these areas within the core.

We propose a more liberal plan of exemptions for general requirements than for the common elements. In general, we propose changing from the approach in which students are exempted from an area in which they major to one in which students are exempted from any areas in which they have a specified number of hours of disciplinary courses (typically nine hours). Specific exemptions are listed for specific requirements.

Our expectation is that many of the courses offered within these areas will diverge significantly from the traditional introductory courses taught at many schools. While we

believe students should be encouraged to take these courses rather than courses at other schools, students could apply AP, [IB](#), or transfer credits towards these requirements so long as a core administrator judged them consistent with the learning objectives.

### ***5.1 Texts and Ideas (3 hours)***

**Course Structure:** A menu of three-hour courses to be taken from the first year onward.

**Learning Objectives:**

1. To engage in reading, writing and discussion about important ideas drawn from the study of important texts in a variety of areas – including among others literary texts, dramatic texts, sacred texts, historical texts, philosophical texts, and scientific texts.
2. To develop capacities for argument, interpretation and aesthetic appreciation through engagement with these texts and ideas.

**Faculty:** Primarily humanities faculty; other faculty from across the university with interests and aptitudes in text-based approaches to teaching.

**Exemptions:** Students taking at least nine hours of approved classes in the humanities, including most English, history, philosophy, religion courses, as well as literature courses taught in classical and modern languages.<sup>2</sup>

**Commentary:** Courses in this requirement will be humanistic in focus but will change in some important ways from our existing humanities requirement. Courses will not dual count with major courses and will be limited to 25 students. They should avoid broad-based disciplinary introductions. We expect the development of a reasonably small menu of core courses. So long as they focus on texts and ideas, faculty from departments outside the humanities could offer courses here. For instance, it might be reasonable for theatre faculty to teach in this division, for political scientists to teach courses on political philosophy, or communications studies faculty to teach courses with a focus on rhetoric. Historians, who straddle the boundary between the humanities and the social sciences, will be able to offer courses in this division so long as they focus on textual approaches.

### ***5.2 Perspectives in the Creative Arts (3 hours)***

**Course Structure:** A menu of three-hour courses to be taken from the first year onward.

**Learning Objectives:**

1. To develop cognitive and affective appreciation for the process and products of artistic creation.

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<sup>2</sup> Excluded course would include language courses, creative writing courses and logic courses.



2. To participate actively in the creation of an artistic product.
3. To reflect on the nature and sources of aesthetic value.
4. To develop habits of participation in artistic and cultural events that will lead to lifelong engagement with in the creative arts.

**Faculty:** Fine arts faculty and faculty in other colleges with interests and aptitudes in the creative arts.

**Exemptions:** Students taking at least nine hours in dance, theatre, music, media arts or creative writing.

**Commentary:** This course will include a broad-based overview of the history, terminology and meaning of the larger artistic discipline being explored. (Faculty with expertise in the history and theory of an artistic discipline could perhaps help to design this part of the course for all in their area.) The bulk of the course will focus on the area of primary expertise of the artist/teacher so that students are engaged in a meaningful way with one specific aspect of a creative art. The second learning objective is particularly important, as teachers in the arts are uniquely equipped to teach in a hands-on, experiential way. Successful course designs will take advantage of artistic performances and resources in the Butler and Indianapolis community. Final projects and performances from all of the creative arts courses could be open to the entire community, creating a festival of student art at the end of each semester at Butler.

Listed below are potential ideas for Perspectives in the Creative Arts courses:

- The Mind of Michelangelo: How did the artist create his work?
- Public Art in the City: What is the function of public art in contemporary society?
- Portraiture: How does the portrait artist choose to represent his or her subject in photography or paint?
- Comedy in film: How does the screen writer produce comedy for the screen?
- Evolution of Recorded Sound: How has technology changed the way we hear and buy music?
- Choral Music Composition: How does a composer create music for large numbers of voices?
- Artistic Directions in Chamber Music: How do chamber music groups select their repertoire?
- Evolution of Classical Ballet: How have approaches to ballet technique evolved over the centuries?
- World Dance Choreography: How do people of different cultures express themselves through dance?
- Acting for the Stage: What is the process whereby an actor prepares for a role in contemporary American theatre?

### ***5.3 The Social World (3 hours)***

**Course Structure:** A menu of three-hour courses to be taken from the first year onward.

**Learning Objectives:**

1. To study selected questions about human beings and the social, cultural, economic, and political world in which they are embedded.
2. To develop an understanding of the variety of quantitative and qualitative research methods social scientists use to study the social world.
3. To develop the ability to discern the social, scientific and ethical dimensions of issues in the social world, and to understand the interaction between a society's values and its definition of social problems.

**Faculty:** Primarily social sciences faculty, and faculty from the professional colleges with interests and aptitudes in the social sciences.

**Exemptions:** Students taking at least nine hours of approved classes in the social sciences, including anthropology, international studies, journalism, political science, sociology, economics, psychology or STS.

**Commentary:** As in other areas, we propose the elimination of dual-purpose courses and a move away from general disciplinary introductions. We also propose limiting classes to approximately 25 students in order to maintain a course that allows for real discussion and other features of an active and engaged pedagogy. We believe it is important that the range of topics discussed in these courses be limited enough to allow students the time to appreciate the methodological characteristics of social scientific inquiry.

Additionally, we think that it would be worth seriously considering the introduction of laboratory elements into this area. Laboratory exercises involving collection or analysis of social scientific data, simulation, or other techniques could give students a better understanding of the distinctive ways of knowing embodied in the social sciences. While we do not make any definite recommendations on laboratory requirements, we encourage the planning committee for this requirement to consider pilot courses with laboratory elements.

Finally, we would like to encourage courses within this area that cross disciplinary boundaries in the social sciences and which involve faculty in the professional colleges with background in the social sciences. Possible areas include gender studies, international studies, peace and conflict studies and science, technology and society.

### ***5.4 The Natural World (5 hours)***

**Course Structure:** A menu of five hour lecture/lab courses to be taken from the first year onward.

**Learning Objectives:**

1. To gain awareness of some significant scientific theories and achievements, and to recognize how they are related both to other areas of science and to our understanding of broader societal issues.
2. To develop an understanding of the methods of natural science and a capacity to reason scientifically.
3. To experience first-hand the scientific process method through discovery-based learning.

**Faculty:** Faculty in the natural sciences and perhaps some faculty in the social sciences.

**Exemptions:** Students who have completed at least eight hours of laboratory science.

**Commentary:** We expect that these courses will primarily be taught by faculty in physics, chemistry and biology, but an appropriately designed experimental psychology course would also fit this requirement. Moreover, nothing in this requirement precludes development of courses that cross disciplinary boundaries either in content or in faculty. We recommend, where appropriate, that faculty adopt the “discovery-based learning” paradigm. Discovery-based learning will shift the emphasis from passive learning to active learning, particularly in laboratories.

### ***5.5 Analytic Reasoning (3 hours)***

**Course Structure:** A menu of three-hour courses to be taken in the first or second year.

**Learning Objectives:**

1. To develop capacities for quantitative and analytic reasoning.
2. To understand the centrality of these capacities to the natural and social sciences.
3. To recognize the applications of such capacities to matters of personal and public life.

**Faculty:** Primarily mathematics, computer science and philosophy faculty

**Exemptions:** Students who have completed at least 5 hours of mathematics or computer science courses above algebra and pre-calculus, students receiving a 4 or higher on the AP calculus test (AB or BC), and students in professional colleges (pharmacy and business) with college mathematics requirements.

**Commentary:** The ability to understand and assess quantitative information is clearly essential to any educated person, and hence we believe that there must be a requirement to address such issues in our core curriculum. Any such requirement should be structured to take into account two challenges. First, students enter the university with a wide range

of skill in this area, and many struggle with basic numeracy. Second, much of the time of students and faculty in mathematics must of necessity be devoted to courses servicing the needs of specific program areas.

In our view the best way to satisfy our learning objectives is to offer a small array of courses that can meet the objectives of the requirement without any prerequisites (i.e., without requiring students to pass an algebra pretest). The following are some possible courses meeting this requirement:

- An applied statistics course that uses case studies to develop the skills necessary to interpret data from a variety of sources, such as clinical trials, risk assessments, and economic forecasts.
- An informal logic course that introduces students to techniques for recognizing arguments, applying principles of inductive and deductive reasoning, and recognizing and avoiding fallacies.
- A scientific reasoning course that introduces students to the techniques of analytic and quantitative reasoning used in the sciences – including hypothetico-deductive reasoning, inductive reasoning, mathematical modeling, and computer simulation.

The many students whose major requirements require significant quantitative courses would be exempted from this requirement. Because of the many exemptions for students with college or major requirements in mathematics, these courses would only be required of perhaps half the student body.

## ***5.6 Physical Well Being (1 hour)***

**Course Structure:** A one credit, two contact-hour, pass/fail course selected from a menu of courses devoted to physical and health education and activities, taken any time in the first to fourth years.

### **Learning Objectives:**

1. To develop life-long habits of good health and physical activity.
2. To increase awareness of the centrality of health and wellness for pursuit of a good life.

**Faculty:** Physical Education Faculty, Pharmacy, and Fine Arts Faculty, others

**Exemptions:** None

**Commentary:** We affirm the importance of physical health and well being to the life of a liberally educated person. We cannot separate the mind from the body, and a person who is in good physical health and leads an active life is both happier and more able to develop his or her intellectual, moral and spiritual capacities.

In our current core curriculum we require one health and wellness course, PE101, and a wide array of activity courses. We are persuaded that in this, as in other areas, we should afford students choices. We envision an array of courses that encompass individual and team athletic activities and courses devoted to wellness issues.

We encourage faculty implementing this requirement to be creative in considering ways to satisfy it. First, we think that this requirement could be satisfied both by classroom courses and by activity-based courses (analogous to the current PE102). We also think that we should find ways to give credit to students for other curricular or cocurricular activities (e.g., varsity athletics, dance, and marching band) that promote physical activity and wellness.

We recommend that students be allowed to repeat this course for credit, but that only two credit hours should count towards graduation requirements.

In the current core there is logic to requiring two credit hours. One of the credit hours is a classroom based experience and the other is an activity based experience. The proposal removes that distinction with the courses to be classroom based, activity based, or a mixture of the two. Thus, the requirement to take two credits in this area becomes just a volume requirement. We have found that to be hard to justify and have cut it back to just one credit hour. We hope that the one course will be enough to encourage students to take seriously issues concerning their physical well-being and that, along with the presence of the new fitness center, students will find abundant opportunities to look after their fitness both inside and outside the classroom.

## **6 Other Graduation Requirements**

In this section we propose four University graduation requirements that are not part of the core, but which we believe will help realize our ideals of core education, especially the ideal of integrating core education with our students' broader academic and non-academic lives.

### ***6.1 The Writing across the Curriculum Requirement***

**Requirement Structure:** Students must take one 300 or 400 level course of at least 3 hours in any part of the University that provides opportunities for formal and informal writing, with opportunities for revision. The course must be taken in the junior year or after. Courses meeting Writing across the Curriculum requirements will be designated with a 'W' suffix.

#### **Learning Objectives:**

1. To refine habits conducive to good writing developed at earlier stages in core education and education in the major.
2. To use writing both as a tool for learning and as a means for communicating about ideas within a discipline or profession.

3. To address particular issues of content and style that arise in the context of specialized disciplinary or professional writing.

**Faculty:** All faculty

**Exemptions:** None

**Commentary:** The current Writing across the Curriculum requirement has served us well, and is consistent with the aspirations set forth in our statements on Principles and Pedagogy. Accordingly we recommend retaining the requirement in its present form.

We think that this requirement is important in integrating skills developed in the core curriculum into disciplinary and professional education. By requiring this course to be taken in the junior year or after, we also assure vertical integration, helping to reinforce the message that development of writing must be an ongoing commitment of liberally educated persons and of successful professionals.

## ***6.2 The Speaking across the Curriculum Requirement***

**Requirement Structure:** Students must take one 300 or 400 level course of at least 3 hours in any part of the University that provides opportunities for formal oral communications assignments. Courses meeting Speaking across the Curriculum requirements will be designated with a ‘S’ suffix.

**Learning Objectives:**

1. To develop oral communications skills in the context of course and discipline specific materials.
2. To use oral communications assignments to aid students in mastery of course and discipline specific content.

**Faculty:** All faculty

**Exemptions:** None

**Commentary:** In keeping with our general approach of integration of skills development with course content, we recommend creation of a Speaking across the Curriculum proposal analogous to the current Writing across the Curriculum requirement. In our estimation, there is already a good deal of speaking across the curriculum. Many programs require students to take part in capstone seminar experiences in which formal oral presentation is a part. Our aim here is to universalize this practice, providing instructors guidance on how to develop and evaluate assignments and offering students support for developing and practicing their oral communications assignments.

While we expect the majority of students will satisfy this requirement in the context of major courses, we think it advisable that students be able to satisfy this requirement by

taking courses in other areas, and in particular in specialized courses in communications studies.

We offer little detail as to how this requirement should be implemented, because we believe these details need to be worked out by faculty teaching courses in conjunction with the communications studies faculty. A final proposal for this requirement will need to specify requirements analogous to those in place for the Writing across the Curriculum requirement. These requirements should be flexible enough to ensure that speaking requirements complement rather than compete with the other objectives of these courses.

### ***6.3 The Indianapolis Community Requirement***

**Requirement Structure:** Students must take one course in any part of the University that involves active engagement with the Indianapolis community.

**Learning Objectives:**

1. To have an active learning experience that integrates classroom knowledge with activities in the Indianapolis community.
2. To use an experience in Indianapolis to further understanding of the nature of community and the relation to self.
3. To assist the University in furthering its commitment expressed in its mission statement of “providing intellectual, cultural, and artistic opportunities and leadership to Indianapolis and the surrounding areas.”

**Faculty:** All faculty

**Exemptions:** None

**Commentary:** Our core principles emphasize the need for liberally educated students to understand the relationship between themselves and their community. While there is much we can do academically to help students engage with this issue, real understanding must be lived as well as thought. The Indianapolis community provides our students with a remarkable resource for bringing about this lived understanding. At the same time, this requirement allows our students to aid the University in giving back to the Indianapolis community. While this requirement could involve a service learning or community service element, we are explicitly not requiring such an element.

We envision a wide variety of courses satisfying this requirement, including service-learning courses, performing arts courses that involve public performances in the community, social science courses that involve active data collection and ethnographic work in Indianapolis, internships in Indianapolis businesses, education courses that take students into Indianapolis’ classrooms, etc. Many (perhaps most) students in the University already take part in some courses of this kind. We simply wish to universalize and institutionalize this valuable element of their learning experience.

While we will not propose a detailed structure, we expect that this requirement would be administered in a manner similar to the writing across the curriculum requirement. A set of courses (or sections of courses) would be designated as satisfying this requirement (perhaps with an ‘I’ suffix). Many students would satisfy this requirement within their major, but the requirement might also be satisfied by a core course (e.g., in the ‘Problems in Contemporary Society’ area) or by an elective in another department.

[A course with an “active learning experience” that occurs within a local community—whether that community is found within the boundaries of the Circle City or elsewhere, including in another country—can be substituted for the Indianapolis Community Requirement when this experience is “brought back” in a meaningful way to enrich the Indianapolis Community. Substitutions would require the approval of the core administrator.](#)

#### ***6.4 The Butler Cultural Community Requirement***

**Requirement Structure:** Students must attend a total of eight cultural events in the Butler Community. Ideally these will be spread out over their time at Butler, but this is not required.

**Learning Objectives:**

1. To discover that some of the most valuable and exciting learning opportunities at Butler take place outside the classroom.
2. To develop habits of participation in artistic and cultural events that will lead to lifelong engagement with in the creative arts and public intellectual life.

**Exemptions:** None

**Commentary:** Butler has a rich set of cultural activities in the form of artistic performances, seminars and public lectures, which collectively comprise one of our most remarkable educational resources. The aim of this requirement is to get all of our students to take advantage of this remarkable resource. We have two existing models for this requirement – the JCFA recital credit and the honors cultural events requirement. Our aim is to create a similar requirement for all students at the University.

There are many events that would satisfy this credit – performances and recitals sponsored by the Jordan College of Fine Arts, the Visiting Writer’s Series, the Woods Science Lectures series, the Seminar on Religion and World Civilization, events in the Spirit and Place festival, etc. While much of the objective of this requirement could be met by cultural events outside the Butler campus, we recommend that events satisfying this requirement be on the Butler campus. In the first place, we expect that this would make it easier to administer this requirement. Secondly, keeping this requirement at Butler will help students to recognize how much members of the Butler community (including the students themselves) have to offer each other culturally. This feature



seems to us especially valuable in building learning communities that extend beyond the classroom.

To help underwrite student attendance at events that are not free admission, we recommend that the University consider providing students with a “Cultural Activities Card” funded by student activities fees that provided free or reduced price admission to these events. Such a system has been successful at other universities and would, we expect, remove obstacles to student participation at some of our most exciting cultural events.

There are a number of issues regarding how to set boundaries on what count as cultural events and on how to track student participation. We shall leave these questions to follow-on groups, but we are confident in light of the experience of JCFA and the honors program, that this sort of requirement can be administered without undue administrative cost.

## **7 Core Administration**

In order to make this proposal a reality, the core curriculum must have strong administrative leadership and continuing faculty oversight. The administrative leader of the core must have considerable authority over teaching assignments and faculty positions, and must be able to work closely with the Provost and College Deans. He or she must also have a significant budget to aid in faculty and curricular development, and must have a role in faculty evaluation (including decisions regarding compensation, promotion and tenure).

While there are a number of ways one might configure this position, we think one especially worth considering would be to give responsibility for the core to a Dean of University College. We would conceive of University College as an entity whose faculty comprises all those Butler faculty members teaching in the core. The naming of this entity “University College” honors Butler tradition and suggests the ideal of a core owned by the whole University. It also suggests that core education stands on an equal footing with the disciplinary and professional education offered by the five colleges. But while this idea seems attractive to us, we are aware that in light of the history of University College some faculty may perceive drawbacks to this proposal.

It is sufficient for our purposes to call for the appointment of some person with administrative rank equivalent to a Dean or Associate Provost. In the rest of this document we shall refer to person as the “Senior Core Administrator.” The Senior Core Administrator will have the following responsibilities:

- Appointing and supervising Requirement Coordinators where necessary.
- Establishing and supervising faculty development efforts in core education
- Monitoring incoming and continuing class sizes and adjusting the number of courses/sections needed to meet demand

- Overseeing participation by all colleges in delivering Butler’s core curriculum
- Articulating an appropriate reward system for teaching core courses
- Procuring resources for full-time faculty lines as needed for core education
- Establishing a standing budget for support of core education programs and initiatives, such as visiting speakers, course development incentives, and stipends for program coordinators
- Encouraging faculty to maintain currency with national trends in general education through conference attendance and on-campus workshops
- Supervising continuing assessment of core education at Butler

The Senior Core Administrator will need the assistance of the faculty to manage the core curriculum. At a minimum, the common elements, which demand the heaviest interdisciplinary and departmental collaboration, will require faculty coordinators. In addition, there will need to be a faculty committee to provide oversight of the core curriculum as a whole. While ultimate curricular authority would rest with the University Curriculum Committee and the Faculty Assembly, the Senior Core Administrator will need a dedicated faculty committee to assist in curricular and operational matters concerning the core. We propose that this committee be given the name ‘Core Curriculum Council.’ And while we think it is premature to specify the exact composition, we propose that this committee include elected representatives from all five colleges.

## **8 Assessment of the Core**

As with every area of student learning, Butler’s core education program must be assessed routinely and vigorously to evaluate and improve all aspects, including answering the following questions:

- Are students able to demonstrate mastery of specific learning objectives of Butler’s core program?
- Do specific approved courses in the core program continue to meet educational goals and objectives in content over a period of time?
- Does the teaching in core courses demonstrate successful pedagogical methodologies?
- What is the affective response on the part of students and faculty to involvement in Butler’s core program?

- How fully do students, faculty, and advisors understand the rationale for inclusion of the various learning objectives and attendant courses in Butler's core program?

Various assessment methods are required to adequately address these questions. While the literature on assessment articulates many options and approaches, it seems reasonable to provide a structured methodology that should be uniformly applied to all areas of the core. With individual departments and colleges no longer claiming stewardship of a particular segment of the core curriculum, consistency across administrative borders becomes an imperative.

Further, the assessment literature posits that multiple assessment approaches and instrumentalities best serve the needs of a comprehensive review. In consultation with faculty, the Senior Core Administrator must select from among various methodologies, crafting a thorough and ongoing review with consequent modifications.

Given that comprehensive assessment requires substantial management, training, and adequate compensation, the Senior Core Administrator must develop an adequate budget and plan for implementation and continuity.

In order to assure continued attention to learning objectives, the faculty and administration responsible for assessment must put in place should put in procedures for periodic reevaluation of courses taught within the core.

## **9 Implementation**

The core structure proposed in this document provides a set of guiding principles and a curricular skeleton. To transform this proposal into a reality will take the work of faculty across the University over a period of several years. While we cannot prescribe in detail the steps that will have to take place after the dissolution of the task force, we offer the following suggestions:

### ***9.1 Appointment of the Senior Core Administrator***

Implementing the proposals in this report will take strong administrative leadership. Accordingly, we recommend that the Provost appoint an interim core administrator soon after adoption of recommendations in this report. The Provost should also make arrangements for a search for a permanent core administrator. For this purpose, we recommend that the Provost appoint a search committee with broad representation across the university.

### ***9.2 Formation of Requirement Planning Committees***

The core proposal presented in this document is deliberately skeletal. Each requirement description leaves many questions about content, pedagogy and staffing unanswered. We have chosen this skeletal approach in part because of the limits of our time and competence, but more importantly because we recognize that a successful core reform

will must allow the faculty who will be delivering the core a great say in articulating what the core looks like.

Accordingly, each requirement will need to be further developed and articulated by committees of faculty with particular interests and teaching competencies in the area of the requirement. These committees will be charged with developing more specific objectives, models and pedagogies for requirement areas, soliciting course proposals from faculty, sponsoring and assessing pilot courses. Although there are structural similarities between the existing and new core, we recommend that the process of developing and approving courses to meet particular requirements make no presumption about the status of existing courses. While there is clearly much we do well, we should start in each case from learning objectives associated with a requirement and consider afresh what sorts of courses would best meet these objectives. We believe the work of these committees is especially important for the three common core elements, because it is here that we need the most interdepartmental cooperation.

We will not propose particular compositions for the various committees under discussion, but we think it clear that, however they are constituted, they must include experts and veteran teachers in that requirement area, interested faculty who might be new to the area, and representatives of larger campus constituencies.

### ***9.3 Review of Departmental and College Curricula***

Upon adoption of the core structure proposed in this document, we recommend that faculty in individual departments and colleges review their existing curricula in order to determine if changes should be made to more closely integrate their curricula with the core curricula, fill in gaps, or eliminate duplications. Departments and colleges should consider whether consolidations could be made that would allow for greater participation of that unit in the core curriculum. They should also consider whether any pieces lost in the current revision should be made up in their curriculum. As part of this review, we also suggest that the honors program review its requirements to consider whether they could be consolidated and perhaps integrated with the proposed core.

### ***9.4 Hiring of New Faculty***

The President and Provost have committed, as part of our proposed core revision, to provide the resources to hire the additional faculty needed to decrease class sizes, increase the proportion of core sections taught by tenure-stream faculty and eliminate dual purpose courses. In order to facilitate our introduction of the new core, we believe that the process of hiring new faculty should begin with the 2005-2006 search cycle and continue over the next three to four years.

We cannot recommend exactly where these hires will occur. This is a matter of administrative negotiation, and much depends upon where various departments and programs wish to make contributions to the core. We can however suggest two general principles to guide our hiring decisions. First, our core hires should support the core. We would not want any new hire to spend their entire time teaching in the core, but we would

want the assurance that the addition of an FTE to a department would in almost all cases mean a net increase of one FTE to that department's contribution to the core.

Second, we recommend that eagerness and expertise to participate in the core be an explicit criterion in hiring decisions. If for instance, we hope to increase the proportion of tenure stream faculty teaching in the common core elements, we must establish that new faculty hired will be enthusiastic about that duty.

### ***9.5 Timeline***

While we cannot propose a definite timeline, but we believe it is appropriate to set targets. First, we hope that an interim core administrator will be appointed soon after the faculty endorses the recommendations of the committee. Second, we hope that requirement planning committees can be formed during the spring of 2005. We expect that development of course proposals and piloting will take two years, and that students entering in the fall 2008 could graduate under the new requirements.

## 10 Appendix 1: Philosophical Principles of the Core Curriculum<sup>3</sup>

We take the broadest goal of liberal education to be to develop students' capacities to lead a good life; one characterized by knowledge of self, consideration for others, engagement in local and world communities, aesthetic discernment, enthusiasm for the life of the mind, and passion for life's work.

Butler University is home to five colleges all of which believe that the university's first responsibility is the liberal education of its students. The human capacities we develop in the core education experience are general and hence can be put to use in all parts of a person's life. Intellectual capacities allow us to understand the nature of ourselves and of the natural and social world in which we live. Moral and ethical capacities help us discern what is good, and pursue such principles as justice, fairness, kindness, and service. Aesthetic capacities enable us to see relationships among form, pattern, harmony and shape and take pleasure in beauty.

Because we seek to develop capacities rather than just impart information, how we teach our students is as important as what we choose to teach them. Capacities such as the ability to think critically or appreciate aesthetic relationships can be developed through their exercise in any number of content areas; and regardless of content, these capacities will not be developed without a pedagogy that places the responsibility for learning on the students themselves.

While we cannot hope to adequately survey the great ideas and dilemmas of human civilization, core education must at least apprise students of the nature and scope of such ideas and dilemmas from across different times and cultures. Our curriculum must engage these ideas and dilemmas at three levels—the levels of self, community and world. At the level of self, we must introduce students to great questions and ideas concerning the nature of ourselves as individuals. What makes us, materially, emotionally and spiritually, who we are? At the level of community we should help students examine the nature of the social, political, economic relationships that connect themselves to those around them. At the level of world, we should seek to increase students' awareness and understanding of peoples, ideas, institutions and cultures that lay beyond the communities in which they are immediately engaged. At all three levels, we should engage students both intellectually and morally; and at all three levels, we should engender an appreciation of the interplay between human universals and cultural particularities.

To achieve these goals at Butler, core education at Butler should have the following characteristics:

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<sup>3</sup> The text of this section is identical to the statement of principles endorsed by the Faculty Assembly on September 10, 2004.

- The core curriculum should embody the University’s mission of “fostering a stimulating intellectual community built upon interactive dialogue and inquiry among faculty, staff and students.”
- The core curriculum should encourage shared educational experiences, but it should also allow both faculty and students choices to pursue their particular interests and aptitudes.
- All five colleges should share ownership of the core curriculum and integrate its values, skills and goals into the major programs in ways that can be assessed.
- All five colleges should commit faculty to teach in the core.
- There should be central oversight of the Core Education program in order to provide advocacy in administrative discussions, to facilitate staffing, and to ensure ongoing consistency with our philosophical and pedagogical goals.
- Because there are elements of the Butler core that are distinctive, we should place limitations on the amount of the core which can be satisfied by AP or transfer credit, while making allowances for students who enter Butler later in their undergraduate career.
- In order to convey the central importance of the core in the education of our students and to better build the academic community, we should construct a core that can and will be taught largely by tenure stream faculty. We should recruit, hire, and develop a tenured faculty sufficient in number and equipped with the necessary skills to teach the core while maintaining the integrity of the major programs.

## Appendix 2: Pedagogical Principles for the Core<sup>4</sup>

With the expanding knowledge base in today's world, it is virtually impossible to expose undergraduates to everything we believe a liberally educated person should know. Consequently, one of the most important functions of a Butler core education is to instill in our students both the capacity and the desire to continue learning after graduation. Thus we seek a set of teaching methods/strategies in the core that will both enable and motivate students to become purposeful, self-directed, responsible learners.

We champion a pedagogy for Butler's core that reflects the ideals, goals and practices of liberal education: we believe that how we engage students in core courses is, in the long run, as critical as what we teach our students. Acquiring a basic understanding of specific disciplines is, of course, an important part of liberal education, but it is not the most important goal of the core curriculum. Helping students build the capacity to think critically and develop enthusiasm for the life of the mind are the most important goals of the core.

Using a wide variety of strategies to engage the student in the learning process allows each student to work to his or her potential and to understand and appreciate the excitement of learning. Following are examples of good practices taken from educational research:

- 1. Give special attention to the early years.** The transition to college presents difficult social and academic adjustments for students. Instilling a thirst for inquiry and reflection early will set the stage for more rapid growth, development and educational attainment. An important way we do this is to model an approach to the academic life. We model respect for others and their ideas and enthusiasm for the life of the mind as a moral, aesthetic, intellectual, and embodied activity.
- 2. Facilitate coherent, incremental learning.** Students learn, grow and develop when there are clear standards for attainment in sight.
- 3. Integrate education and experience.** This can be done through real-life experiences, community involvement, simulations, essays and journals as well as integrative experiences across disciplines.
- 4. Create active learning experiences.** Simulations and collaborative learning are good, active strategies. Inquiry-based or discovery-based projects can be very effective for critical thinking and problem solving.
- 5. Require ongoing practice of skills** because no one learns complicated skills without making mistakes, starting over, failing, and starting over again. Our pedagogy

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<sup>4</sup> This section contains the text of the pedagogy statement adopted by the Faculty Assembly on 9/10/04.



seldom reflects this reality because teachers are usually more concerned to cover curriculum than to provide classroom time for practice.

**6. Assess learning often and give prompt feedback.** Students cannot improve their learning unless they receive constructive suggestions for improvement in time to adjust their practice and enhance their efforts.

**7. Respect diverse talents and ways of knowing,** and recognize that teachers convey the importance of “respect” to students not so much by teaching it but by modeling it. Responding to different ways of knowing will enhance learning for students.

**8. Increase informal contact with students.** Make the curriculum and the extra-curriculum work together to support students’ learning.

**9. Share the core’s liberal arts orientation with students as the framework for particular classes.** Instructors should strive to explicitly connect the goals of their core courses to the outcomes of liberal education and of core education at Butler. If students can be shown how each course “fits in” with the aims of their liberal education, they have greater motivation to pursue the value of the course (for the simple reason that they can now see the value that was formerly invisible to them).

Students should help in posing the questions that will be answered in the core courses while being challenged to see how they are related to the central issues of the self, the community, and the world. Learning goals should be clearly articulated in these courses and should always have students doing much of the work to arrive at the conclusions. This will involve a pedagogical paradigm shift that will require, in some cases, faculty development initiatives. Such a “discovery-based” learning approach is encouraged in the Strategic Plan, indicating a University commitment to its realization. Learning should involve choices of approaches and products as ways for students to achieve the goals of the course. Though lecturing has its place among teaching methods, simply presenting information and then telling students the outcomes that they should take from this information models the idea that the professor has all of the knowledge and the student is a blank slate. This of course is not true, and students need to be able to “hook” knowledge to previous experience or have new experiences provided so that they can attach meaning to the information. In other words we are developing the capacity for student learning, not merely transferring information that may or may not be retained.

The core curriculum must provide the basis for continued learning on the students’ parts. We believe that a fresh and explicit commitment to pedagogy must become a significant and pervasive feature of Butler’s new core curriculum. As students develop through their four years into thinking, valuing adults, they will need to become strongly independent and have the assurance that they themselves can come to conclusions, support those conclusions with data, and translate this learning into ways that lead to the good life as discussed in the statement of principles. <<<< I would prefer to end this sentence: "to lead a life that is good in the sense described in our statement of principles.">>>>

We are recommending that these good practices be the dominant strategies or pedagogy of instruction in the core. To help teachers think introspectively, reflectively, and critically about both the content of what they model and about the mechanisms of how they model will mean strong faculty development for those wanting to teach in the core. It also means a commitment to smaller class sizes for these core classes, and groups of faculty willing to work together to develop strategies of engagement within the core. We know that we have outstanding teaching faculty at this university, many of whom are using good practices and continuing to learn about ways to engage students. We want the core to build on that base and have faculty learn from each other as well as from their students. Butler's core curriculum develops critical thinkers who will become lifelong learners with a lasting sense of curiosity about themselves, their community, and their world.