

Assessment of the Core Curriculum at UST

One of the ways that UST has decided to evaluate the effectiveness of student learning in the Core Curriculum is to look specifically at the effectiveness of each course in the Core that contributes to accomplishing the goals of the core curriculum. The Core Curriculum Development and Implementation committees have presented a set of ten goals, each with one or more student learning outcomes. These are presented in Appendix A. One of the ways we will assure that we are achieving our Core Curriculum outcomes is to ensure that each faculty member teaching in the Core Curriculum assess their own effort at achieving the outcomes that apply to his/her course. We will ask each faculty member to choose at least one specific learning outcome that is addressed in his/her course. (More on this below.) Then the faculty member will determine an expected outcome for this learning outcome. This will normally be stated as a given percentage of the students will meet or exceed some measurable standard for measuring student learning. Finally the faculty member will be asked to reflect on this measurement and make some statement about any changes or improvements (if any) that might be considered to improve student learning. This is all entered on an electronic form in 2012-2013, (Appendix B) and into an online database thereafter.

This process is not designed to provide chairs or administrators support for planning and program development. It is designed specifically to help faculty members to systematically determine how well their effort is accomplishing the goals of the Core Curriculum, and to help each individual faculty member to participate in continuous improvement.

Learning Outcomes

Consider, for example, the faculty member teaching CHEM 1341 General Chemistry. This is a course a student can take to satisfy part of the group 9a *Natural Sciences* or the 9b. *Natural Sciences and Foreign Languages* Core Curriculum requirement. The learning goal that this course supports is Goal 8:

To develop aptitude in quantitative reasoning together with knowledge of the methodology of the natural and social sciences in order to foster appreciation of scientific thinking for understanding nature and human behavior.

The student learning Outcomes are:

- 1) *Students will identify what data is necessary in the analysis of scientific and/or business scenarios and use that data to derive appropriate conclusions in such scenarios based upon accepted norms.*

- 2) *Students will approach a natural and/or social science scenario using the appropriate methodology and will state the research question and data necessary to complete an analysis of the scenario based upon accepted norms of the science.*
- 3) *Students will evaluate the usefulness of scientific thinking in their understanding of their experiences of natural phenomenon and human behavior.*

The faculty member would select the one of these that is a learning objective for his/her course. It may turn out that the faculty member would like to combine, restate or embellish these student learning Outcomes and add one of his/her own design. That is completely acceptable. Please be sure the statement of the student learning objective is in a form parallel to the provided Student Learning Outcomes.

Assessments

The faculty member then finds an assignment, project, exam question or other product of the students effort that will demonstrate the students' attainment of the chosen learning objective. Specifics of the product used and how it was evaluated are provided in the column named "*Describe the Assessment Method*". For each student the assessment method should rate one of:

- Exceeds the standard
- Meets the standard
- Does not meet the standard

A simple rubric is often helpful in doing the assessments. For example:

Exceeds the Standard

Not only does the student use the correct methods and obtain a largely correct answer, but the student is able to present the solution well, and justify the solution through an understanding of the larger context of the problem.

Meets the Standard

Student uses correct equations and tools to solve the problem. Student arrives at a largely correct solution to the problem.

Does not meet the standard

Student does not use correct equations and methods to the problem, or student does not apply the chosen method correctly.

The rubric or other assessment is applied to the student products, and the appropriate percentage scores are entered in the column named "*Actual Outcome*"

Expected Outcome

This is the percentage of the students that the faculty member feels should either meet or exceed the standard for the assessment of the learning objective. There is no correct value or prescribed value. The number is typically between 70% and 85%, but there is no rule. This assessment may be for a product that students are only beginning to comprehend so a value of 60% is

reasonable, or maybe it is of a product that it is expected that all students will do well, so a value of 90% is reasonable.

After Action Review

After all of the assessment has been completed, the faculty member will reflect on the results to determine what changes (if any) might be implemented to improve student learning. Sometimes the assessment used does not really reflect student learning. In this case the change suggested may be to use a different assessment. Other changes might be changing emphasis on certain topics in the course, or changes in the assignments given. It is also very reasonable to determine that this assessment does not suggest any changes at this time.

Appendix A

Goals and Outcomes of the Core Curriculum

1. To promote the pursuit of knowledge both for its own sake and to form habits of mind through which knowledge and mature into wisdom and understanding can stimulate the contemplation of truth, goodness, and beauty.
 - 1) Students will draw the distinction between things known for practical purposes only and things known simply for the good of understanding the truth.
 - 2) Students will justify and explain how knowledge of truth in itself perfects a person.
 - 3) Students will identify at least one ultimate cause and show how knowing this cause gives insight into human existence.
 - 4) Students will explain clearly and succinctly why, in the Catholic Tradition, loving God will lead to happiness while pursuing the attainment of mere creatures will not.
 - 5) Students will explain what it means for something to be true, good, or beautiful.
 - 6) Students will seek and appraise an experience where they confront the mystery of truth, goodness, and beauty.

2. To educate the whole person - academically, socially, and spiritually - in order to prepare students for meaningful lives and inspire them to continuous learning that confronts essential and enduring questions about the meaning and conduct of human life.
 - 1) Students will draw the distinction between things known for practical purposes only and things known simply for the good of understanding the truth.
 - 2) Students will justify and explain how knowledge of truth in itself perfects a person.
 - 3) Students will identify at least one ultimate cause and show how knowing this cause gives insight into human existence.
 - 4) Students will explain clearly and succinctly why, in the Catholic Tradition, loving God will lead to happiness while pursuing the attainment of mere creatures will not.

3. To encourage an ongoing dialogue between faith and reason and the encounter between culture and the Gospel as ways of integrating knowledge, achieving an organic vision of reality, and deepening an understanding of God and His revelation in the person of Jesus Christ as mediated through Scripture and the Church.
 - 1) Students will articulate and defend the necessarily harmonious relationship between ethical truths known through reason, and moral truth, as contained in divine revelation.
 - 2) Students will integrate knowledge about nature, the human person, and God known through reason with knowledge about nature, the human person, and God known through revelation.
 - 3) Students will express and illustrate how grace builds on and perfects nature.
 - 4) Students will express the integral relationship between Catholic dogma, the sacraments, and moral truth.
4. To affirm the dignity of the human person as the source of social justice, respect for human rights, and regard for the proper interests of communities.
 - 1) Students will uphold the dignity of the human person.
 - 2) Students will demonstrate an understanding of the dignity of the human person as the source of social justice.
 - 3) Students will demonstrate respect for human rights and the proper interests of communities consistent with a commitment to the dignity of the human person.
 - 4) Students will reflect on the proper interests of communities.
5. To develop competence in critical thinking, critical reading, effective writing, and oral communication in necessary relation to the skills of gathering, interpreting, synthesizing, and presenting information with integrity and clarity.
 - 1) Students will demonstrate ability to reason critically.
 - 2) Students will demonstrate ability to read critically.
 - 3) Students will write a paper that meets the standards for academic communication.
 - 4) Students will present a speech or other example of oral communication that meets the standards for academic communication.

- 5) Students will gather, interpret, synthesize, and present information in written form meeting the standards of academic communication.
- 6) Students will gather, interpret, synthesize, and present information in oral form meeting the standards of academic communication.
6. To understand the bearing of the past on the present and the future and to appreciate the historical character of human inquiry in exploring the principal philosophical, religious, political, literary, and aesthetic traditions of Western and world culture.
 - 1) Students will discuss the principal philosophical, religious, political, literary, and aesthetic traditions of Western and world culture.
 - 2) Students make connections between past and present through analysis of primary sources and assessment of their contemporary relevance.
7. To cultivate a critical appreciation of art and literature that arouses wonder and forms the imagination in its engagement with the enduring cultural and spiritual values inherent in great works of human creativity.
 - 1) Students will critique and appreciate art and literature with awareness of both the inherent aesthetic and historic-cultural qualities that apply.
 - 2) Students will display interest in and appreciation for great works of art and literature.
 - 3) Students will display an active imagination in response to the world and to works of art and literature.
8. To develop aptitude in quantitative reasoning together with knowledge of the methodology of the natural and social sciences in order to foster appreciation of scientific thinking for understanding nature and human behavior.
 - 1) Students will identify what data is necessary in the analysis of scientific and/or business scenarios and use that data to derive appropriate conclusions in such scenarios based upon accepted norms.
 - 2) Students will approach a natural and/or social science scenario using the appropriate methodology and will state the research question and data necessary to complete an analysis of the scenario based upon accepted norms of the science.
 - 3) Students will evaluate the usefulness of scientific thinking in their understanding of their experiences of natural phenomenon and human behavior.

9. To inculcate ethical thinking in judging conduct and reflecting on the moral implications of developments in science, technology, business, and society in order to promote making decisions on the basis of transcendent moral values.
 - 1) Students will apply ethical standards in judging conduct.
 - 2) Students will identify the moral and/or ethical aspects of developments in science, technology, business, and society consistent with a Catholic perspective.
 - 3) Students will understand and appreciate how transcendent moral values would inform decisions in professional and personal life.

10. To nurture the study and appreciation of other languages and/or cultures as a means of promoting charity, understanding, and respect for the diversity of cultural forms, religious beliefs, and social practices.
 - 1) Students will value other languages and cultures as a means of promoting charity, understanding, and respect from the diversity of cultural forms, religious beliefs, and social practices.
 - 2) Students will understand the importance of a commitment to a life of service.

ASSESSMENT OF CORE CURRICULUM GOALS

Term	
Course	
Instructor	
Dept Chair	

Core Goal	Goal n: Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. In id nisi in nisl facilisis mattis quis quis sem. Aenean sed ligula ante. Etiam sollicitudin sem.			
Student Learning Outcomes (select the Core Goal SLO or enter your own SLO from your syllabus)	Describe the assessment method.	Expected Outcome	Actual Outcome	Use of Results
n.1: Cras eu dui nec lectus pellentesque imperdiet. Sed aliquam mi eros, quis dignissim risus venenatis eget. Donec facilisis lorem id mollis lobortis. Vivamus eu.			Exceeded:	%
			Met:	%
			Did Not Meet:	%
			Exceeded:	%
			Met:	%
			Did Not Meet:	%
			Exceeded:	%
			Met:	%
			Did Not Meet:	%
			Exceeded:	%
			Met:	%
			Did Not Meet:	%