

REVISED VERSION SUBMITTED TO THE AAB

**CORE 2010: *CROSSING BOUNDARIES***

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**A REVISED LIBERAL ARTS CORE CURRICULUM  
at COLGATE UNIVERSITY**

16 APRIL 2009

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## Summary

### *Colgate's Core Program*

One of the most ambitious general education programs in the country, Colgate's Core asks students to confront questions of identity, culture, and knowledge across intellectual boundaries. The Core crosses temporal boundaries and socio-political boundaries, as well as the boundaries of academic divisions and disciplines. The Core also emphasizes the capacities – critical reading and thinking, effective writing, being able to move from the specific to the general and back, understanding diverse perspectives, and an overall sense of intellectual wonder – that are critical to a liberal arts education. By having a Core, Colgate affirms the centrality of a common experience for our students as they grapple with enduring questions at the heart of a liberal arts education. That common experience takes seriously classic texts as well as multiculturalism and globalization, the importance of the past as well as the contemporary moment, the relevance of modern science and technology as well as the humanities. In sum, the Core asks students to think in integrative, cross-disciplinary ways about their world and themselves.

The Core has been a continuous center of the curriculum since 1928, yet the program has not been static. Colgate faculty have a tradition of combining a strong commitment to general education with a willingness to periodically review and revise the program and to innovate in both curriculum and pedagogy. The current version of Colgate's general education program, titled the Liberal Arts Core Curriculum, began in 1996. The Core currently includes a four-semester requirement (Western Traditions, The Challenge of Modernity, Cultures of Africa, Asia and the Americas, and Scientific Perspectives), a six-course distribution requirement by division, and upper-level elective courses leading to distinction and high distinction in the Core.

The Core is woven into institutional culture with participation from faculty in every academic department. According to the self-study done at the time of the 2004 External Review, "Around forty-percent of faculty teach in Core in a given year and more than three-fourths of current continuing faculty have taught in Core during the past five years." The Core has always asked students to be integrative learners, to confront their worlds from a variety of perspectives. It has also served as a faculty development seminar on a grand scale, an opportunity for faculty to collectively think about models of learning and teaching that transcend disciplinary and divisional boundaries. The proposal below reaffirms the goals of our Core curriculum.

### *Core Revision Process*

Colgate University is justly proud of its long history of excellent General Education programs. Each incarnation embodies the heart of Colgate's liberal arts education – the *core* of the university's curriculum – and reflects the faculty's consensus on what students must learn to live responsibly while helping them develop into "wise, thoughtful, critical thinkers and perceptive leaders."<sup>1</sup> For more than three decades, Colgate University has revised its existing General Education program every ten or twelve years. Over the past two years, we have been engaged in such a process, focusing on how best to educate our students so they are equipped to live in a century that is already defined by significant new challenges and opportunities. Since Spring 2007, the Committee has sought input from faculty in many different ways and contexts: several faculty fora; faculty-generated proposals (more than 30); working sessions at two White Eagle conferences; and multiple

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<sup>1</sup> Colgate's Mission Statement

meetings with Core staffs, Division Directors, Chairs of departments and programs, and many interested individuals. This proposal is a product of that extended dialogue.

### *Guiding Principles and Motivation for Revision*

Changes in several areas motivate revisions to Colgate's Core Curriculum: in students and faculty, the world, and approaches to how knowledge is acquired and shared. While the hopes and ambitions of students persist across generations, Colgate students today are increasingly diverse and bring with them new expectations appropriate to the times in which they live. In addition, the world they inhabit is now, and will continue to become, more thoroughly global. Many factors define this reality – interconnectedness, diversity, changing responsibilities, new challenges of truly world-wide proportions, and so on – and recognition of these has strongly shaped this proposal.

Periodic revisions to Colgate's Core program are also appropriate not just because of "staleness" that may occur in a program over a long period of time, but because faculty – their areas of expertise, pedagogical interests and philosophies, and so on – change, often significantly. Some faculty who have been heavily invested in the program retire, while many new faculty arrive at Colgate in the intervening years. It is crucial that Colgate's Core program remains vital to all continuing members of the faculty, provides opportunities for change and improvement, and welcomes faculty with new ideas and perspectives to enhance an evolving curriculum.

Finally, since the last Core revision, there have been significant changes in how Colgate organizes and approaches the teaching of knowledge. In just over a decade, we have added several new interdisciplinary majors and minors, study groups, extended study courses, and have introduced linked courses, service learning, fractional credit, joint faculty appointments between departments and interdisciplinary programs, as well as Institutes and Centers. While such changes increase the intellectual vitality of the University, they also strain departments' abilities to sustain commitments to concentration, Core, and interdisciplinary programs. The recent Middle States Self Study's title, "Balancing Ambitions and Resources," aptly identifies a central challenge for Colgate. We note from the outset that this revised Core program will need ample resources to succeed.

The committee extends its sincere thanks and appreciation to the many people who shared time, energy, and perspective during the revision process, especially the staff of current Core components.

## **Core Mission, Improvements, and Goals**

### *Overview*

Colgate's Core program is a defining feature of its Liberal Arts curriculum. Our proposal for a revised Core Curriculum at Colgate takes seriously the faculty's mission to engage students in the fullness of a liberal arts education: to learn, reflect, and live with an expanding awareness of one's responsibility to self, community, and the larger world. As such, Colgate's revised Core Curriculum aims to prepare students for rich and fulfilling lives that will exist against a backdrop of rapid change here and around the globe. Enabling students to navigate the complexity of their world requires a curriculum sufficiently focused to guide student investigations and explorations, yet appropriately flexible to tap faculty expertise, energies, and passions. In seeking to meet those ends, the model recommended by the Committee:

- retains and revitalizes the most successful elements of Colgate's present Core Curriculum
- presents a new component to satisfy perceived deficiencies

- identifies the components where students have opportunities to improve key skills and competencies
- recommends incentives for faculty whose engagement in Core requires intensive collaborative expectations and responsibilities.

### *Improvements*

First and foremost, the revised Core Curriculum retains and builds upon the elements of our current curriculum so that these provide a foundational backbone to the academic program. The overall purpose of those components and their relationships to other elements in the revised Core are clarified. In our present Core, some components are less interdisciplinary and less clearly connected to other elements of the Core. This revision calls for revitalization of *all* components. Even if the present program was initially an integrated one, some faculty and many students have difficulty explaining the rationale for the program as a whole. The present Core curriculum seems fragmented, because its parts do not seem related to each other. Our new framework integrates separate components and identifies areas of intersection.

Our proposal for a revised Core Curriculum also addresses perceived and real weaknesses in the present general education program. Some of these shortcomings relate to the tension, even dichotomy, that is built into the present Core structure between the “West” and the “other” parts of the world (the “rest”). In our existing model, Core Cultures stands off by itself, and it appears that “modernity” is only a Western phenomenon. Eliminating this dichotomy in our revised proposal enhances our ability to better prepare Colgate students for life in an increasingly interconnected world where more informed perspectives of the self in relation to multiple communities (local, national, and international) will be essential for effective participation in contemporary life.

A critical finding of the Spring 2004 External Review Committee alluded to the apparent lack of commonality among and within the four components of the current Core Curriculum, despite language to the contrary. The External Review Committee asserted that the commonality claimed by Core 151 and 152 had dissipated over time despite regular staff meetings as the teaching faculty in these courses were granted ever more autonomy in structuring their individual sections. Also, both Core Cultures and Science Perspectives lacked common texts or experiences, and so students enrolled in different courses offered by these two Core components had little to share with one another, or so they believed. On the whole, the staffs of each component support a significant degree of faculty autonomy in their individual courses. Yet teaching in the Core necessitates balancing autonomy *and* commonality. Therefore, the new Core Curriculum encourages collaborative efforts among faculty and Core courses in more ways than they do in the present course offerings. The University Professors and staffs of courses in each of the four Core components in the new program are charged with defining and promoting commonality among their faculty and students. These may include regular staff meetings during a term to discuss pedagogies, readings, or events. Other possibilities for promoting common learning might involve the articulation of shared goals or objectives, the identification of specific intellectual skills that will be emphasized among sections of a Core component, and the organization of out-of-class events requiring the attendance of faculty and students of various Core courses.

As stated in the 2004 Report of the External Review of the Core Program, distribution requirements as they are defined currently need to be rethought, because they lack a strong intellectual rationale. Both the Middle States Self Study and the Report from the Middle States external evaluation team likewise offer the same criticism of the distribution requirements as currently configured. This

Proposal reconceives the distribution requirements in terms of "areas of inquiry" rather than in terms of administrative units. This change, while of little immediate significance, provides intellectual coherence to the distribution requirement and is meant to encourage creativity in thinking about how the requirements may be refined in the future.

The proposed Core revision acknowledges that the emerging realities of the twenty-first century will be exceedingly complex and will require fluid and fluent minds to comprehend them. Learning how to approach and define problems, how to ask questions that help reveal the deep undercurrents of issues will require an ability to recognize the connections among a wide array of disciplinary explanations embraced by the arts and humanities, the social sciences, and the natural sciences. The Core Curriculum fosters a common learning experience that will enhance the ability of students to form independent judgments and by so doing enable them to transform and shape the world they have inherited in creative, meaningful ways. Thus, the new Core Curriculum is an earnest attempt to have students encounter and recognize the inter-layered dimensions of problems and issues, and begin to develop confidence in crossing disciplinary boundaries as a method of inquiry.

A Core program for the future thus needs to help students make connections *among* Core courses and *between* the Core, the "areas of inquiry" cultivated within different divisions, departments and programs, and their chosen major. Hence, Colgate's new Core is revised as a *comprehensive, holistic* program that unites discipline-based areas of inquiry with multi- or inter-disciplinary components, emphasizing important skills and competencies that become more finely honed through students' majors as they approach graduation. In essence, the new Core is designed to serve as a bridge that allows students to encounter, recognize, and cross multiple types of boundaries – both personal, intellectual, and academic – while developing habits of mind and heart that will sustain them through their adult lives.

### *Educational Goals*

During the recent Middle States Self Study, educational goals were articulated that characterize how Colgate attempts to prepare its students to use the knowledge, imagination, competencies, and passion they acquire here in their future lives. Further review of these educational goals is currently being undertaken by the Academic Affairs Board (AAB), highlighting the need in an evolving curriculum for constant reevaluation and revision of curricular goals so that they remain current and relevant for each new generation of students.

As described by the AAB in April 2009, the educational goals of the Colgate curriculum expand upon the university's mission statement and enable students to:

1. see themselves honestly and critically within a global and historical perspective
2. discover complexity and richness through study of: human behavior, social relations, and institutions; of nature, scientific methodology, and the role of science in contemporary society; and of the intricate structures of thought and expression that constitute human culture
3. gain a graduated experience of the methodology, modes of thought, content, and discourse of a particular field of study, complemented by an understanding of the limitations of any one perspective and by an appreciation for the value of interdisciplinary inquiry
4. cultivate crucial habits of mind: gathering and integrating information into concepts to solve real-world problems, practicing critical and creative thinking, listening and reading well, speaking and writing effectively

5. grow in both confidence and humility, articulating a set of values that respects the diverse perspectives and qualities of others
6. embrace responsibilities to local, national, and global communities and to the natural environment.
7. develop a lifelong curiosity about the world that will encourage continued growth in knowledge and wisdom.

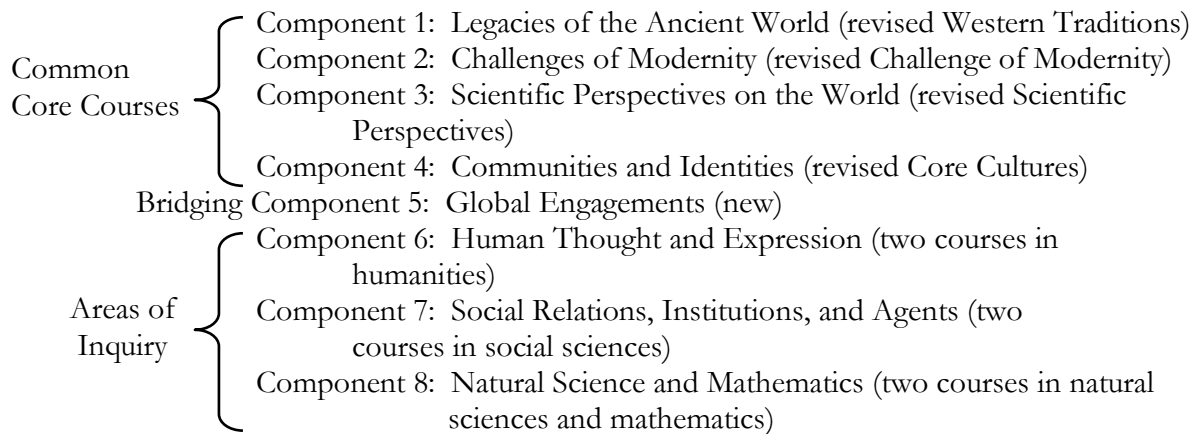
In the sections that follow, we identify those parts of Colgate’s academic program that will make major contributions to helping students meet the institution’s educational goals.

## **Structure of the Liberal Arts Curriculum**

### *Overview of Intellectual Framework*

The revision we present consists of eight components that retain the best of our present general educational curriculum while encouraging exploration in new and exciting directions. Four are interdisciplinary courses (modeled to varying degrees on Core 151, Core 152, Core Cultures, and Scientific Perspectives) that all students must take, and one is a new bridging component that invites students to take at least one course from any department or interdisciplinary program across the university that underscores our increasingly global, interconnected, and diverse world. The proposed Core does not, however, lose sight of the intellectual and methodological values or of the importance of disciplinary study. Hence three components require students to take two courses in different departments or programs from each of three areas of study: Human Thought and Expression; Social Relations, Institutions, and Agents; and Natural Science and Mathematics.

The proposed comprehensive Core curriculum is as follows:



First Year Seminars with their emphasis on Liberal Arts skills also contribute to the Core Curriculum.

“Crossing Boundaries” is the centralizing theme of this eight-fold Core. Four inter-related components – “Legacies of the Ancient World,” “Challenges of Modernity,” “Scientific Perspectives on the World,” and “Communities and Identities” – provide contexts where students engage in cross- disciplinary conversation. Interdisciplinary courses educate students in complementary ways about the origins, beliefs, traditions, and profound ideas that shaped their own as well as those that shaped other cultures, helping students to “see themselves honestly and critically within a global and

historical perspective.”<sup>2</sup> These courses also help students appreciate how an emerging global community can be transformed in dynamic and significant ways by advances in science and technology and by the rapid transmission of information, ideas, and practices. The new Global Engagements Core requirement will further aid students to understand better the complex and diverse world in which they live, nationally as well as globally.

Interdisciplinary courses provide students with many opportunities to understand how multidimensional approaches yield a more integrated perspective of past, present, and future circumstances. Yet productive interdisciplinary inquiry stems in large part from keen insights and practical skills gained from discipline-based training. Thus a complementary part of a united Core asks students to “discover complexity and richness through study of human behavior, social relations, and institutions; of nature, scientific methodology, and the role of science in contemporary society; and of the intricate structures of thought and expression that constitute human culture.”<sup>3</sup>

To assure breadth of intellectual experience, students must take two courses in two different departments or programs that represent three Areas of Inquiry: human thought and expression; social relations, institutions, and agents; and natural science and mathematics. These courses will be drawn primarily from three Divisions: Humanities, Social Sciences, and Natural Sciences and Mathematics, although it is the recommendation of the CRC that courses currently in University Studies may be reviewed and, where appropriate, accepted as fulfilling this Areas of Inquiry requirement.

The newly added component, Global Engagement (GE), is described at length below. For now, what is important to highlight is that the courses which will fulfill this requirement may be drawn from department and program courses within all four academic divisions. The GE requirement will focus attention on the rich contributions made throughout the University curriculum to the critical understanding of diversity and globalization. Moreover, since a course taken to fulfill GE credit may also fulfill an Area of Inquiry and/or major requirement, the GE requirement serves more as an inflection of the existing offerings than an additional requirement drawing energy or resources away from departments and programs.

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<sup>2</sup> AAB goals

<sup>3</sup> AAB Goals, January 2009



*Conceptual Curricular Templates*

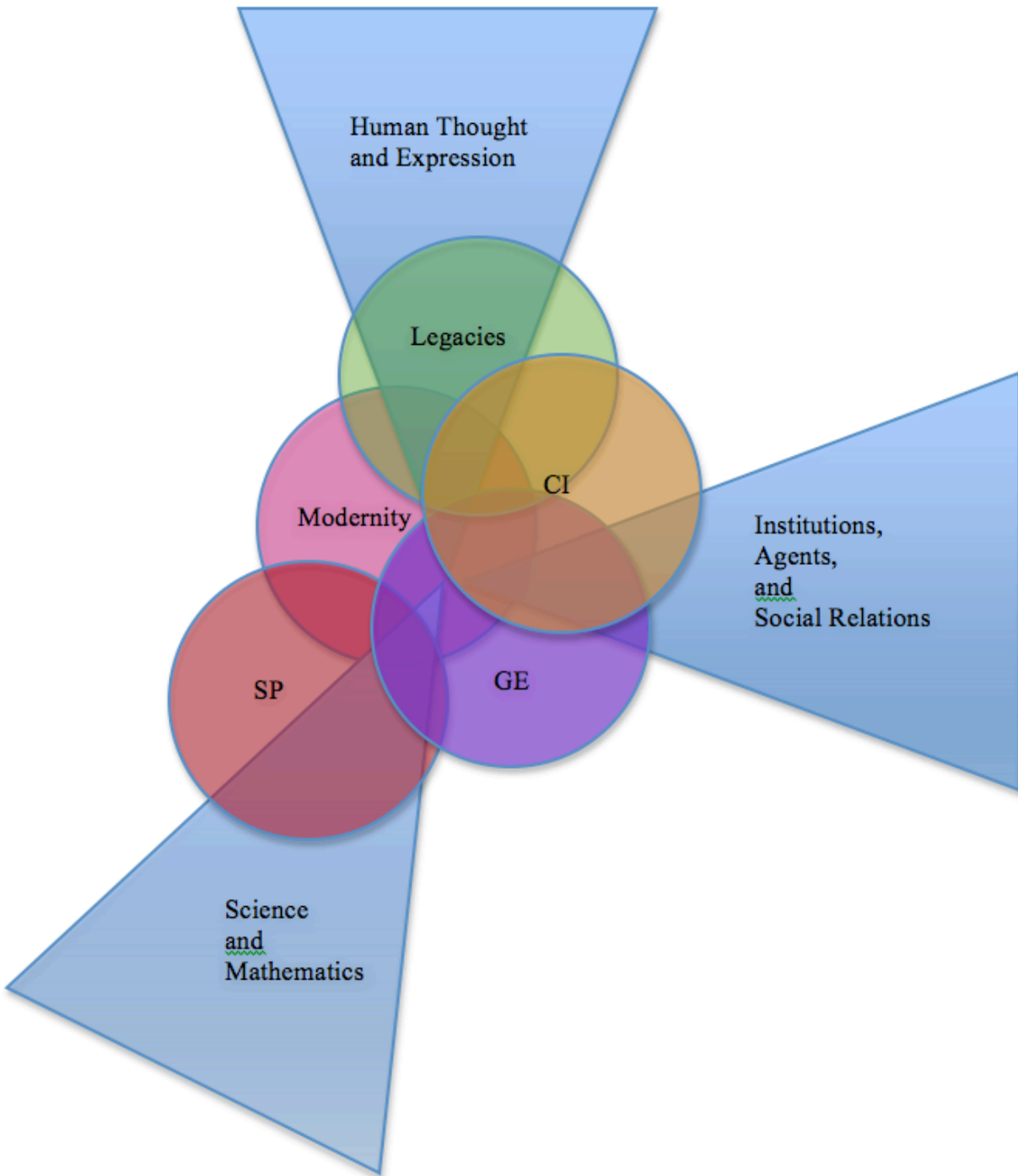
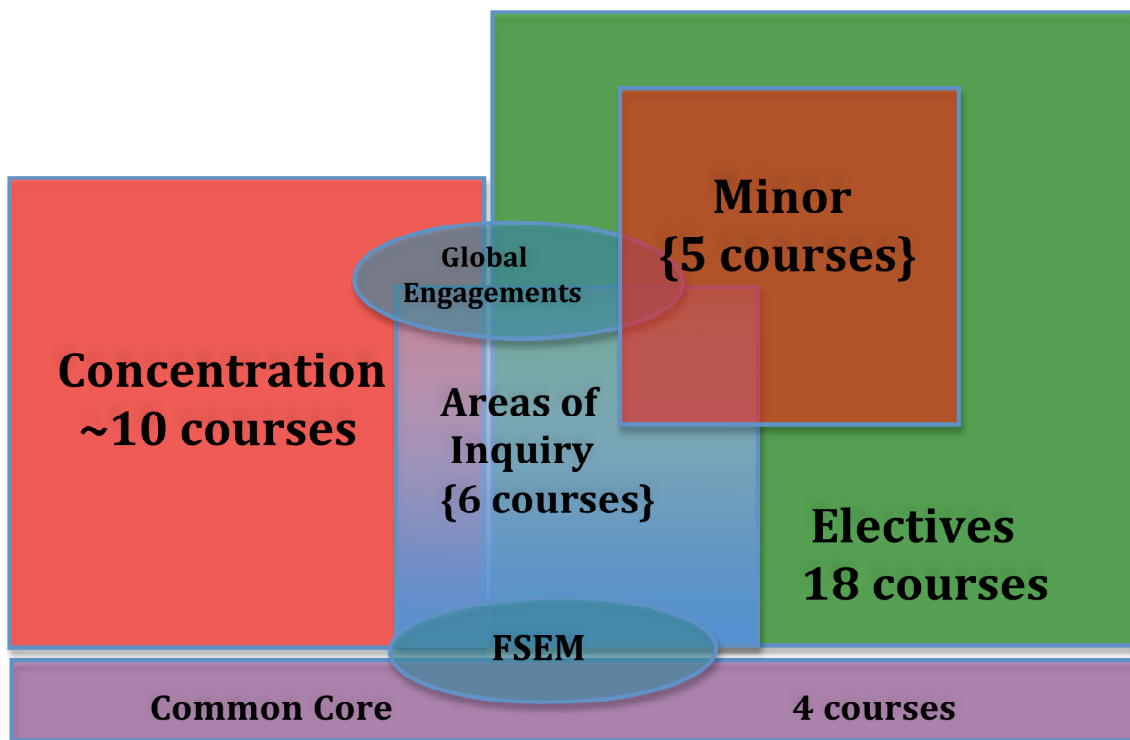
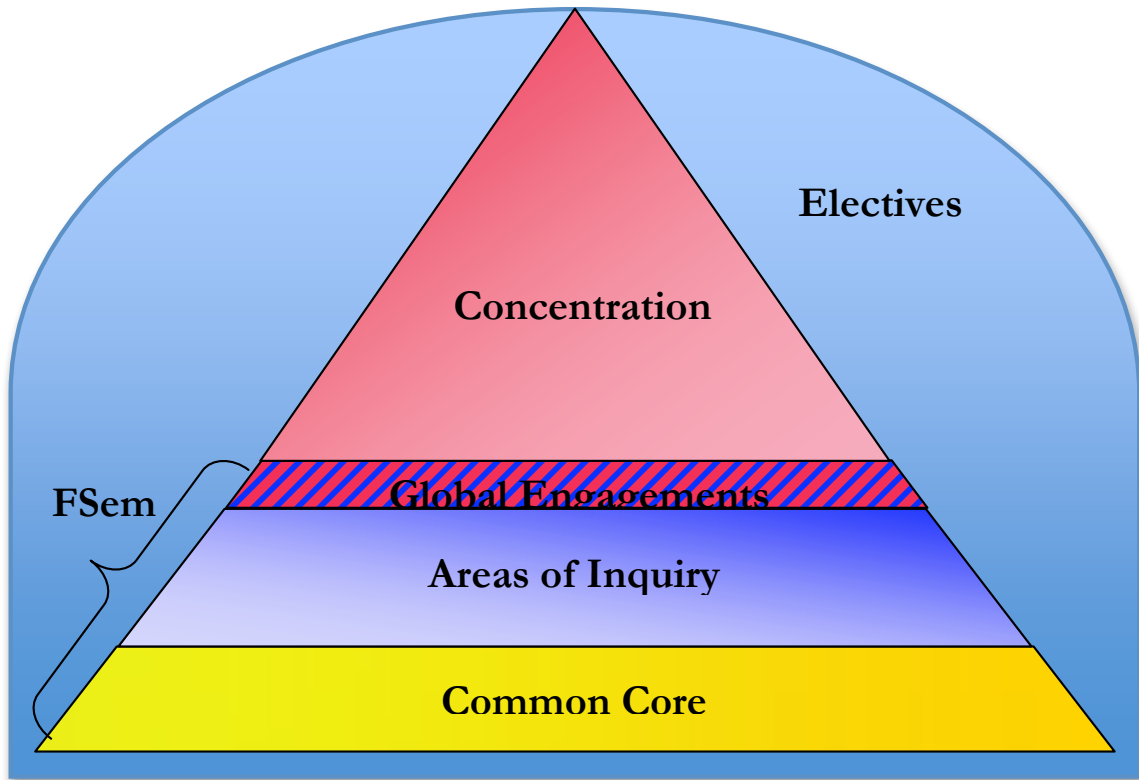


Figure 1 depicts the intellectual overlaps in the Liberal Arts Core Curriculum.



Figures 2 and 3 depict the Liberal Arts Curriculum as a whole, showing how the revised Core fits into the trajectory of a student's whole Liberal Arts education at Colgate.

## *Component 1: Legacies of the Ancient World (revised Western Traditions)*

**Description.** This course, taught by an interdisciplinary staff, explores texts from the ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern world that have given rise to some of the philosophical, political, religious, and artistic traditions associated with “The West.” To highlight both the dialogue and conflicts between the texts and these traditions, it focuses on both the historical contexts of these texts and the ongoing retellings and reinterpretations of them through time. To accomplish these objectives the course is necessarily multidisciplinary, combining historical, literary, and philosophical methodologies. Common to all sections of this component are classic works such as Homer, the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament, Plato, and a Roman text. Complementary texts or visual materials from the ancient period in and beyond the Western world and/or response texts from the medieval or contemporary periods are added in individual sections or groups of sections. Thus, students can expect that some individual sections and groups of sections will have particular themes. These themes will be identified at registration every term.

**Intellectual Rationale.** The texts of this component articulate perennial issues: the nature of the human and the divine; the virtues and the good life; the true, the just and the beautiful; the difference between subjective opinion and objective knowledge. They exemplify basic modes of speech, literary forms, and patterns of thinking that establish the terminology of academic and intellectual discourse and critical thought: epic, rhetoric, tragedy, epistemology, science, democracy, republican government, rationality, the soul, spirit, law, grace. Such terms have shaped the patterns of life, norms, and prejudices that have been continually challenged, criticized, and refashioned throughout history. Thus, as this component introduces students to foundational terminology and traditions, it recognizes that a tradition is not a monolith but a series of problems, questions, issues, and values that are continually debated. Moreover, the course emphasizes that Western traditions were not formed in a vacuum but developed in dialogue and conflict with other traditions, some of which lie beyond the geographical area of “The West.” This course attempts to communicate to students the interplay of text and interpretation, assertion and critique that is the ultimate legacy of the ancient world.

**Pedagogical Expectations.** Faculty in this course will strive to:

- meet the specific educational goals and objectives of this component in the context of the larger Core program (see discussion below)
- teach each section with a combination of lectures and class discussion
- attend bi-weekly staff meetings to discuss pedagogical strategies, scholarship on course texts, and overall goals of the component
- attend special faculty seminars and the annual White Eagle meeting on the texts, scholarship, and pedagogy connected to the teaching of this component
- require at least fifteen pages of writing distributed over no fewer than three analytic, thesis driven papers.

**Educational Goals and Learning Outcomes.** Legacies of the Ancient World contributes to the goals of the Colgate Curriculum as articulated by the AAB, as studying ancient texts allows students to:

- “see themselves honestly and critically” through an “historical perspective” on Western culture
- “discover complexity and richness” through the study of “the intricate structures of thought and expression that constitute human culture”

- “grow in both confidence and humility,” as they learn to articulate “a set of values that respects the diverse perspectives and qualities of others”
- “develop a lifelong curiosity” about foundational texts that “will encourage continued growth in knowledge and wisdom”
- see themselves “honestly and critically” by reflecting on the traditions that came before them.

As a consequence, students in this component will achieve:

- a command of close textual analysis as a method of reading ancient texts
- an ability to think critically and constructively about central issues of human existence like the nature of humanity, divinity, truth, and justice
- an understanding of the relation of ancient texts to their historical contexts
- an understanding of how ancient literary texts are retold and reinterpreted through time
- an ability to construct and articulate intellectual arguments
- an ability to write thesis-driven essays.

**Changes from Current Core.** In the last Core revision in 1996, the committee sought to move away from a common syllabus and common exams for all Core 151 sections. Faculty felt at that time that the common syllabus stifled creativity, and enthusiasm for the course was low. The major change in 1996 allowed faculty more freedom in choosing texts and in structuring the course. Thus the number of common texts was reduced, and all faculty were allowed to add their own “response texts” according to their individual interests. The result has been increased creativity and interest by individual faculty members in their individual sections of Core 151. However, a 2008 review of syllabi from the current Core 151 reveals that there is now such great variety in individual Core sections that Core 151 lacks a genuine sense of commonality. The nature, goals, and objectives of each section vary so greatly that we are in danger of falling into a “menu driven” list of fifteen different courses.

Since there is little enthusiasm for a common syllabus for all sections of Legacies of the Ancient World, we propose an intermediate strategy. Legacies of the Ancient World will encourage faculty to join together in small groups to offer a number of sections with the same theme. Examples of such themes are: “Literatures and Aesthetics,” “Political Philosophy,” “Cosmopolitanism,” and “The Good life and the Good Society.” These may be designated in the catalogue with a colon as follows: “Legacies of the Ancient World: Cosmopolitanism.” This information will give students more of a sense of what they are signing up for at registration time. We will begin with a number of “pilot” same-theme sections and hope to move to three or four themed versions of this component within a year. Faculty who still want to teach their own section of the component in their own way will be allowed to do so.

An additional change to the 1996 course has been to encourage faculty to move away from teaching the “Western Tradition” course as a monolithic and singular tradition. Faculty are now encouraged to stress the multiple traditions and cultural legacies that spring from the ancient Mediterranean and Near East and to show how separate traditions developed in relationship and conflict with each other. Faculty will also be encouraged to include texts outside of the “West” such as the Qur’an or the Bhagavad-Gita.

**Practical Considerations and Commitments.** Those faculty who launch new themed pilot sections of Legacies of the Ancient World will need to write a description of the course and submit it to the chair of this component. After receiving approval the faculty should meet multiple times in

the semester or summer before they teach to develop a book list and a basic week-by-week syllabus of topics and readings. In addition the group should plan to continue to meet during the semester to coordinate activities, discuss texts and pedagogical strategies, and monitor the success of the pilot group of courses. As a general rule faculty in pilot groups should meet for 15-20 hours in the semester before and during the time that they teach. These meetings are in addition to the regular staff meetings of the Legacies faculty. As launching a new pilot series of sections for Legacies takes considerable preparation and time, those faculty who undertake to launch new pilots deserve modest compensation for participation.

**Future Directions.** Staff of Legacies see themselves as playing an important role in contributing to the new Core emphasis on preparing students for a diverse and globally connected world. The Legacies of the Ancient World course gives students important historical information to understand the roots of the modern world and the sources of modern politics, religion, art, and culture. The course provides information on the traditions and institutions against which much of modernity defined itself. Thus, knowing where we are now requires the knowledge of where we have been, which this component provides. At the same time, ancient cultures were themselves occupied with issues of diversity, globalism, cosmopolitanism, cultural synthesis, and self-definition that are currently in the forefront of our world. It is anticipated that the new format of Legacies, which allows for themed sections, will enable the staff to teach students about ancient cultural models for dealing with the themes of diversity, globalism, and the crossing of boundaries between and among cultures.

### *Component 2: Challenges of Modernity (revised Challenge of Modernity)*

**Description.** Challenges of Modernity, taught by an interdisciplinary staff, invites students and faculty to explore a variety of texts that engage with the ideas and phenomena central to modernity. A matrix of intellectual, social, and material forces that have transformed the world over the last quarter millennium, modernity has introduced new problems and possibilities into human life. It was initially articulated in the West, yet its developments have not been limited to any particular culture or segment of the globe. Nor have its expressions been limited to any particular discipline or medium. Fields of learning and expression associated with the humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences have all contributed decisively to modernity's power as well as to its critique. Challenges of Modernity encourages students to think broadly and critically about the world that they inhabit, asking them to see their contemporary concerns in the perspective of the long-standing discourses of modernity.

Within modernity, issues of meaning, identity, and morality have been critiqued in distinctive ways. People of different social classes, racial groups, ethnic backgrounds, genders, and sexual identities have contributed to an increasingly rich public discourse. The human psyche has been problematized, and the dynamic character of the world, both natural and social, has been explored. Urbanization and technological development have transformed the patterns of everyday life for many. Imperialism has had a complex and lasting impact on the entire globe. The human capability to ameliorate social and physical ills has increased exponentially, and yet so has the human capacity for mass destruction and exploitation.

**Intellectual Rationale.** The experience of the Modernity component should help both students and faculty to direct a critical eye to their own habits of mind, their presuppositions, and their prejudices. It should encourage thinking across disciplinary and cultural boundaries, while also demonstrating the rewards of focused, critical engagement with substantial texts – verbal, visual, and

musical. The course should help students understand that they are part of larger social structures, concerns, and pressures. At the same time it should alert them to the necessity of self-reflection and self-criticism in an environment marked by such pressures. The common materials chosen by the staff each year should encourage exploration of at least some of the following: the challenges presented by a diverse social world for both cultural understanding and personal identity; the intellectual, social, and material challenges of a constantly changing world; the power, value, and burden of tradition within such a changing world; the social, cultural, and political challenges associated with urbanization, industrialization, capitalism, and imperialism; and the power of the sciences as explanatory models regarding the natural and social worlds.

### **Pedagogical Expectations.**

- The Challenges of Modernity staff will identify at least six primary common “texts” from the modern period to be taught in all sections offered each academic year. As this course aims to instill in students an appreciation for the enduring value of materials from the past, at least four of those texts will come from before 1940.
- Normally at least one common text will be changed by staff agreement at least once every three years.
- Those common materials, which must reflect a broad range of disciplines and modes of expression, will serve as the focus of no fewer than ten weeks of the semester. Normally they will be integrated into written assignments and will be central to examinations.
- Individual faculty may commit up to four weeks of the course to material of their choice beyond those common texts. Such additional materials should contribute to the comprehensive vitality of the course.
- All Modernity sections will require at least fifteen pages of writing distributed over at least two papers.

**Educational Goals and Learning Outcomes.** The Modernity component contributes to many of the goals of the Colgate curriculum as articulated by the AAB:

- “see themselves honestly and critically within a global and historical perspective”
- “discover complexity and richness through study: of human behavior, social relations, and institutions; of nature, scientific methodology, and the role of science in contemporary society; and of the intricate structures of thought and expression that constitute human culture”
- “gain a graduated experience of the methodology, modes of thought, content, and discourse of a particular field of study, complemented by an understanding of the limitations of any one perspective and by an appreciation for the value of interdisciplinary inquiry”
- “cultivate crucial habits of mind: gathering and integrating information into concepts to solve real-world problems, practicing critical and creative thinking, listening and reading well, speaking and writing effectively”
- “grow in both confidence and humility, articulating a set of values that respects the diverse perspectives and qualities of others.”

Thus, students successfully completing this course can anticipate growth in the following areas:

- awareness of how ideas and issues cut across diverse fields of inquiry and modes of expression
- familiarity with ideas central to modernity as well as familiarity with the interrelationships of those ideas
- appreciation for close reading and writing as tools for understanding.

**Practical Considerations and Commitments.** To enhance the intellectual community of the staff, the Modernity faculty teaching in any given semester will engage in at least two three-week seminars.<sup>4</sup> The topics will be identified at the White Eagle meetings the previous spring, and may range in focus from explorations of specific texts (which may or may not be part of the current common materials list) to broad topics such as religion within modernity or modernity and prejudice. These seminars will be in addition to at least three staff meetings held shortly before and during the semester in which logistical and organizational issues fundamental to the course's cohesive operation will be addressed.

**Changes from current Core 152.** The revised Modernity component differs from the current Core 152 in several ways.

- It expands the period from which common materials may be drawn as well as the geographical/cultural context within which they may originate. Core 152 worked with a so-called "core period" (c. 1840-1940) in the West from which the "core texts" were chosen. Then so-called "response texts" could be added from beyond that period to contextualize the "core texts." The fact is that students saw little or no difference between the "core" and the "response" texts and the distinction has been waived. In the proposed program the staff itself has responsibility to define the common materials - and hence the heart of the course - each year by means of engaged discussion. Moreover, the staff has agreed that the opportunity to draw materials from outside the West will enhance the potential impact of the course on our students.
- It increases the number of required common texts from four to six, thereby enhancing the commonality that we consider crucial to both student and faculty experience. At the same time, the change of at least one text at least every three years will enhance the continuing intellectual freshness of the course for participating faculty.
- Traditionally the vast majority of staff meetings have been pedagogical in orientation, but the newly created "seminars" will focus on texts and issues fundamental to an ongoing debate/discussion relevant to all staff members regarding modernity's multivalent significance. In addition to discussions within scheduled staff meetings, pedagogical support will be organized by the Modernity University Professor (UP) with particular focus on assuring the development of new staff members through productive mentoring relationships.

In sum, the newly revised Modernity component differs from the current Core 152 in its commitment to greater commonality of texts across all sections; its expansion of the temporal period from which core texts may be selected; its openness to non-Western materials; its focus of energies on the mentoring of new faculty on the staff; and the intellectual community that is fostered during staff seminars.

### *Component 3: Scientific Perspectives on the World (revised Scientific Perspectives)*

**Description.** The courses in the Scientific Perspectives (SP) program are unified by two common purposes. First, these courses deepen students' understanding of the methods used in scientific fields to acquire knowledge about the world. Each of the SP courses focuses on some specific, compelling area of scientific research and uses that area of research to give students grounding in the interplay of scientific analysis, verification, and explanation. Second, the SP courses broaden

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<sup>4</sup> Modernity faculty not teaching in a specific semester are welcome to join the semester staff in these seminars.

students' understanding of the relevance of scientific methods by helping students to apply scientific methods and findings to a broad range of issues. Specifically, these courses help students to connect their growing understanding of scientific methods either to a topic relevant to society and to the human experience or to an area of knowledge or mode of inquiry outside the natural sciences and mathematics. In this way, SP courses are multi-disciplinary in focus. Because empirical methods and quantitative reasoning are used in a variety of disciplines, the topics of the SP courses span the study of the physical world, biological processes, human behavior, mathematical methods, and technological innovations. SP courses should provide an illustration of the application of the scientific method through an active learning, problem-oriented experience for students.

**Intellectual Rationale.** All people routinely face important decisions about their own lives and about issues of broader social significance that require scientific literacy. In order to make thoughtful decisions about such matters, students need to have a solid understanding of how scientific knowledge is obtained and an appreciation of the complexities of applying scientific findings to broader issues. The SP courses are designed to address both of these needs.

First, the SP courses complement the departmental courses in the Natural Sciences and Mathematics by focusing on the methods of science. The introductory courses in the NASC division introduce students to the content of particular fields of study. Although the introductory NASC courses sometimes address the means used to obtain scientific knowledge, they do not always do so in depth. The SP courses more explicitly and more thoroughly familiarize students with scientific methods, the development of scientific ideas over time, and the limits of the questions that can be addressed through empirical means.

Second, SP courses help students to make connections between scientific methods and other areas of inquiry. Many SP courses address societal issues that affect and are affected by scientific research. These courses address the historical and contemporary influence of scientific findings on individuals, societies, and the natural world. Other SP courses help students to make links between scientific methods and areas of inquiry outside the typical purview of science and mathematics. In either case, students have the opportunity to investigate how the scientific perspective shapes and responds to knowledge about the world generated by other means. The courses thus should enhance students' capacity to integrate scientific perspectives into a more comprehensive and critical understanding of the world. Further, because many issues addressed by scientific inquiry cut across temporal, geographical, and even cultural boundaries, this component fosters habits of mind that appreciate interconnectedness in the context of human thought and activities.

Finally, the smaller size of the SP courses offers students other opportunities that they may not have in larger introductory NASC courses. Because the SP courses are generally limited to 25 students, the SP courses often allow for rich opportunities for discussion and for hands-on experiences. Thus, rather than using only an lecture approach, the SP courses use an active learning approach to help students learn how to use empirical methods to solve problems.

**Educational Goals.** SP courses are designed to meet the following goals:

- familiarize students with essential aspects of scientific methodologies, particularly the central roles of logic, verification, and quantification in scientific inquiry
- foster awareness of the manner by which scientific knowledge and understanding are created, are tested, and evolve



- help students to reflect critically on the intellectual power of the scientific enterprise, the degrees of certainty and ambiguity associated with its findings, and the limitations inherent in a purely scientific perspective on the world
- encourage habits of mind that meaningfully integrate scientific perspectives into a comprehensive and critical understanding of the world

Requiring students to complete a Core component dedicated to SP will support Colgate's educational objectives, as envisioned by the AAB, by enabling students to:

- “discover complexity and richness through study ... of nature, of scientific methodology, and the role of science in contemporary society”
- understand “the limitations of any one perspective” and appreciate “the value of interdisciplinary inquiry”
- gather and integrate “information into concepts ... [that address] real-world problems”; and
- “develop a lifelong curiosity about the world.”

**Pedagogical Expectations.** Faculty offering courses in SP will be expected to:

- attend workshops each semester when teaching an SP course and attend White Eagle to discuss pedagogy and goals for the program
- look for alternatives to a lecture-based approach for some coursework; this may include data collection and/or analysis
- find ways to make links between the course content and students' lives
- recognize that some students may be science-phobic or may lack skills; therefore find ways to address these issues and build on students' strengths
- support the continuing development of the SP program, for example, by reviewing proposals for new SP courses.

**Learning Outcomes.** Students successfully completing this component will be able to:

- bring appropriate empirical and/or quantitative methods to bear on problems
- undertake informed readings and analyses of scientific texts, materials, and findings
- incorporate scientific and mathematical information in effective written and/or oral presentations
- critically reflect on the application of scientific methods and findings to societal issues or to questions posed by fields of inquiry outside the natural sciences and mathematics.

**Practical Considerations and Commitments.**

- At present, over fifty SP courses have received formal approval within the current Core program, and these courses should continue to meet the objectives of a revised Core. Staff for SP courses comes primarily from faculty in the Natural Sciences and Mathematics division, but faculty from the Humanities and Social Science divisions make valuable contributions to the SP program as well. Faculty from the NASC/M, SOSC, and HUMN divisions will be encouraged to consider developing SP courses that highlight topics that are exciting to them and that meet the adopted guidelines for such offerings.
- Faculty will now be expected to attend a staff meeting each semester they are teaching an SP course.
- Faculty will be encouraged to work together to design courses that could be taught by different faculty at different times or to offer new sections of SP courses that have previously received approval.
- Faculty proposing courses will be asked to focus on how the proposed course meets the educational goals of SP. Current guidelines give a detailed list of the many ways in which an

SP course might accomplish the goals of the component. There should be greater clarity that a single course need not engage in every item on the list in order to accomplish the goals of the component.

- The Natural Sciences and Mathematics division has established expectations for the number of SP courses to be offered by each department each academic year. Given that this arrangement was reached over a decade ago, the expectations should be revised to take into account the current number of faculty in each department. The Natural Sciences and Mathematics division also has an agreement with the Dean's Office regarding the expected number of SP seats to be offered by the Natural Sciences and Mathematics division each academic year. This agreement should be continued to ensure an adequate number of seats for the program each year.

**Changes from the Current Core.** This revision does not require a substantial revision of the SP program; rather, recommended changes are generally designed to help SP instructors become even more effective in meeting the program goals in their courses.

The SP program has few common activities. As noted above, faculty will now be expected to attend a staff meeting each semester they are teaching an SP course. In addition, the SP Chair will work with the Science Colloquium Series coordinators to schedule a lecture or panel discussion each semester that will be of broad interest to students taking SP courses. SP faculty will be encouraged to require their students to attend this common event. The events should relate to one of the major themes of the program.

The current model for SP courses is for single faculty to create courses generally taught only by the person who proposed the course. Faculty should also be encouraged to work together to design courses that could be taught by different faculty at different times. Such common courses would enable faculty to share pedagogical strategies and readings. Faculty can also be encouraged to teach new sections of SP courses that have previously received approval.

The SP program currently has a list of requirements ("musts" and "shoulds") to be met in the development of new SP courses. When this list of requirements was created, it was not expected that every new SP course would meet every "should" requirement on the list. This lengthy set of requirements has sometimes made the course approval process onerous. In the revised program, the list of requirements for SP courses will be pared down to those that are most essential to the goals of the program, with the recognition that different SP courses will meet these goals in different ways

**Future Directions.** As the SP program continues to develop over the next several years, it should be prepared to undertake the following:

- the SP Chair should evaluate whether the changes to the SP program have been effective (e.g., the addition of a once-a-semester meeting for staff teaching in the program that semester, the Science Colloquium lectures, and panel discussions)
- some SP courses are currently cross-listed with the SP program and with departmental or interdisciplinary program courses; the Chair of the SP program and the other University Professors should evaluate whether these courses are effective in meeting the goals of the SP program and whether such courses could work more effectively using a different structure
- the SP Chair should periodically consider the appropriateness of the SP guidelines, especially in relation to assessing new course proposals.

#### *Component 4: Communities and Identities (revised Core Cultures)*

**Description.** Courses in the Communities and Identities (CI) component are designed to provide students with a more textured understanding of identities, cultures and human experiences in particular communities and regions of the world. They seek to examine critically the multiple forms of social life that contribute to the world's cultural diversity, and to analyze the ways in which any one society functions as a unified whole and yet encompasses multiple and sometimes conflicting identities (based, for example, on gender, race, status, class, sexual identities, religion, language and so forth). As investigations into a particular place and its extensions, they will consider cultures and communities as places in their own right, with their own practices, histories, beliefs, and values, their own instantiations of modernity, and lastly, with their own capacities to produce and shape complex identities. Furthermore, because many of the societies that are the subject of study have had significant and enduring encounters with imperial powers or other forms of domination, these courses will examine the tensions and permutations, asymmetries and alliances that such relationships have produced.

Multidisciplinary in focus and materials, these courses explore the complex identities of persons through study of their geography, history, politics, and economics as well as their languages, literature, film, art, music, and religions. Students will develop a comparative, historical frame of reference between the community being studied and the communities to which they belong, so that they acquire a broader perspective on issues of widespread significance.

**Intellectual Rationale.** In an increasingly interconnected and pluralistic world, it is essential that students acquire the ability to think past stereotypes in order to grasp the complexity, diversity, and dynamism of all human communities. CI courses help students cultivate greater cross-cultural competence by giving them a solid command of the diversity and richness of a particular geographically defined-place; a broadened perspective regarding the plurality of beliefs, values and conventions encountered in different societies, including their own, which includes both appreciation and a measure of skepticism; and an understanding of how people create community and foster belonging, while distinguishing themselves from others through social institutions (politics, economics, religion, etc.) and expressive traditions (music, literature, theater, film, etc.).

**Pedagogical Expectations.** This component stresses the study of a community or region for its own sake and in its own terms. We expect that to do justice to such an endeavor, the pedagogy **must**:

- be grounded in the faculty member's expertise in the region, country, or community under consideration
- employ a multidisciplinary approach
- use multiple media – from maps to art to film to music to text
- introduce students to the theoretical debates that shape current discourse about cross-cultural encounter and understanding
- include a research project.

Course content **might** foster:

- a grasp of the dramatic historical and social implications of that area's experience with colonialism and neocolonialism or alternatively, the effects of a particular group's diasporic experience
- an exploration of the complex ways contact with other cultures impacts all involved
- a consideration of theories analyzing the invention of "otherness."

**Educational Goals and Learning Outcomes.** The overarching educational goals of this component are to teach students how to:

- enhance their knowledge about and understanding of a particular geographically-located place
- think creatively and critically about how communities and identities in a particular place are shaped by historical and geographical forces, and about how they respond through varied forms of cultural and political expression
- develop information literacy and academic research skills as they engage in research for a significant project.

These goals are in close alignment with Colgate’s broader educational aims, as articulated by the AAB, such that successfully completing a CI course should enable students to:

- “see themselves honestly and critically within a global and historical perspective”
- “gain...an understanding of the limitations of any one perspective and by an appreciation for the value of interdisciplinary inquiry”
- “grow in both confidence and humility, articulating a set of values that respects the diverse perspectives and qualities of others”
- “embrace responsibilities to local, national, and global communities”
- “develop a lifelong curiosity about the world that will encourage continued growth in knowledge and wisdom.”

As a consequence of successfully completing this course, students will attain:

- an ability to apply theory on cross-cultural interaction to a historical or contemporary situation
- a critical awareness of the complexity of multiple voices in any culture
- an ability to express their critical perspectives through writing
- an ability to exchange ideas, formulate opinions, and engage in class discussions informed by close study of course materials.

**Practical Considerations and Commitments.** In this component:

- courses will be capped at 25
- faculty will be encouraged to plan events that bring together students from multiple sections of a region or country (e.g., all the students in three CI: Middle East or two CI: China courses).
- faculty will meet at the White Eagle retreat to select reading(s) that will be shared among all the CI courses that academic year. Such readings may theorize cross-cultural understanding/interaction or frame issues common to all communities
- faculty will endeavor to promote greater commonality among the sections of CI, to integrate common readings into all CI sections, and to hold at least two staff seminars during the semester. One will help to coordinate logistical and organizational matters for the component. The other will be a seminar focused on the shared reading. Faculty will be expected to attend both meetings in the semester in which they are teaching.
- one or more faculty each semester might link their course with another Core component.

**Changes from Current Core.** Whereas in the previous Core Cultures, courses focused only on regions in Asia, Africa and the Americas, this component supports the full internationalization of

the Core Curriculum by encouraging development of new courses on communities, nations, and regions in Western Europe and North America. With significant increase in migration around the world over the last one hundred years, questions of national culture and community in every nation have become more complex, and more urgent. Courses will examine communities for their own sake, and with attention to internal diversity, regardless of their particular geographical location. In order to develop greater commonality among the sections, and heighten the critical acumen developed in these courses, the revised component also requires that students engage with some kind of theoretical discourse (whether social theory, literary theory, psychological theory, modernization theory, etc.) that provides a framework for comprehending cross-cultural interaction and understanding that can be applied beyond a specific instance.

Consistent with new scholarship that focuses on the role of agency in the construction of identity, the courses acknowledge, and seek to depict, the multiple identities constituted and embodied by diverse societies from the west coast of Africa to Siberia. Hence, the courses in this component may examine not only the ideals that underpinned the colonial ambitions of imperial powers, for example, but also the re-positioning and re-framing of those ideals in different places from provinces in Spain to colonies in Africa and the Americas.

Finally, it is important to note that the Communities and Identities component shares an important goal with Core Component 5 (Global Engagements) of helping students cultivate the habits of mind that will empower them to negotiate a diverse, complex, and inter-connected world. As discussed above, the multidisciplinary approach of Communities and Identities explores the cultural, material, social and aesthetic diversity of human experience in a particular place. By contrast, course offerings in Global Engagements (as described below) are departmental or program courses that enable students to understand and engage responsibly in our increasingly integrated world.

**Future Directions.** Given the multidisciplinary nature of this component, faculty have an opportunity to show students the value of different disciplinary approaches from anthropology to literary criticism. Yet, there are several challenges to such an undertaking. First, some agreement will need to be reached among faculty about common texts that will serve to frame these courses theoretically. Second, agreement should also be reached regarding not *which* disciplinary approaches will be emphasized, but *how many* any individual faculty member can be expected to master. Such an endeavor will require training and deserve compensation. In addition, the staff of the component should regularly assess how the changes are working, e.g. regarding the effectiveness of the staff meetings, or whether the University Professors should limit the number of sections per semester that focus on places in Western Europe or North America.

### *Component 5: Global Engagements (new)*

**Description.** Living in a multi-cultural society and an interconnected and pluralistic world brings with it complexity, challenges, and a rich array of perspectives. In recognition of this, the Core Revision Committee recommends the introduction of a Global Engagements (GE) component within the Core. The ability to think critically about issues related to both the local and the transnational dimensions of diversity are fundamental as the realities and processes of globalization draw the world community together more tightly. As a result, courses from departments and programs across the University that inquire into the ways that people create, organize, respond to and seek meaning in worlds enriched, but also made more complex, by diversity have distinctive importance. They merit the serious attention of students and are the focus of GE. To satisfy this component students will be required to complete successfully a designated course. Faculty who

wish to have a course included in this component must apply for GE designation; no faculty member will be required to have their course designated as a GE course.

**Intellectual Rationale.** The purpose of this component is to provide students with an opportunity to analyze and debate thoughtfully the conditions and consequences of global and more extensive intercultural interaction, both in the U.S. and the broader world, so they will be prepared to confront responsibly the challenges of the twenty-first century. Developing an understanding of the processes that have given rise to a globalized world, and cultivating empathy for the varied perspectives that infuse it, is not only essential for students leaving Colgate after graduation. Such understanding is also necessary for students to benefit fully from the rich, diverse community they find here. Ultimately, the Global Engagements requirement seeks to empower students to live responsibly in contexts that require an understanding of the complexity of human beings and their impact, whether in the United States or in the broader world.

We recognize that there are many ways to approach this objective. The following categories are provided as examples of some possible foci for GE courses. These categories are not necessarily exhaustive. To qualify for satisfaction of the GE requirement, a course must include a substantial emphasis on topics/materials relevant to such categories.

*Globalization:* Some GE courses will engage students in an exploration of how different fields of study focus a lens on the transmission, reception, and transformation of people, ideas, texts and objects as they cross significant boundaries: geographical, cultural, and/or linguistic.

*Global Issues:* Other courses will focus on the consequences of globalization, the manifold issues that arise out of human diversity and the impact of human societies on the world. Disease, natural disasters, species loss, global warming, economic development, social justice concerns, and the sometimes unexpected consequences of cross-cultural interaction all challenge and transcend national borders and are worthy of rigorous investigation. Courses that examine one or more of these issues in a single society (including the United States) and those that engage in the comparative study of one or more global issues in different societies will both have an important place in this component.

*Cultural Immersion – Language Learning:* Given that knowledge of foreign languages and cultures represents a vital component of global engagement, this component may be fulfilled through study of foreign languages at Colgate to appropriate levels. This reflects the fact that current practices in foreign language pedagogy emphasize cross-cultural understanding, alongside grammatical and communicative competence, as fundamental to language learning. Students learn that their ways of thinking have been conditioned by their own linguistic and cultural systems. As they encounter the practices and cultural artifacts of the target culture, they must overcome their own cultural biases and predispositions in order to interpret them in a valid way and to act appropriately. In addition, knowledge of the target language enables them to achieve a degree of insight into the foreign culture that only foreign language study can provide. The required level of language study, which may vary from language to language, will be determined by a consultative process that includes the Humanities Division director, language departments or programs, the University Studies Division Director, and the UPs.

*Cultural Immersion – Study Groups:* In a similar way, participation in off-campus study groups may introduce students to cultures and people whose ideas, social and political arrangements, history, and arts offer alternate ways to believe, value, and create and to structure institutions and organize

relations. Here too emphasis on diversity within those regions or countries as well as interconnections with near and distant neighbors should enable students to learn about relations forged in another part of the world. Departments and programs sponsoring study groups might describe the ways one course, or the study group as a whole, fulfills the expectations of the Global Engagement component.

*Cultural Expressions:* Some GE courses will provide opportunities for students to deepen their understanding of our interconnected world by asking them to examine how specific aspects of human diversity and/or globalization are reflected in literature, philosophy, art, film, theatre, and music. Others will engage in sustained comparison of the differences and similarities between societies and/or forms of cultural expression arising from different societies, whether or not those societies have interacted or responded to one another in the past.

*Power, Privilege, and Difference:* Still others will examine how diversity and social inequality may be analyzed theoretically (e.g., race, feminist, sociological, post-colonial theory) or on an applied level in national or transnational contexts. These courses examine the limits and possibilities of cross-cultural interaction and understanding; they consider how “difference” is made an object of analysis in various disciplines and how understanding “difference” affects our understanding of agents and institutions. A course that examines various forms of social inequality, addressing issues that include, but are not limited to, racism, sexism, heterosexism, and classism could also have an important place in this component.

**Pedagogical Expectations.** Global Engagements courses will be drawn from throughout the curriculum. Each GE course will reflect the pedagogical approaches appropriate to the associated department or program, but all GE courses must include a significant emphasis on globalization and/or diversity and these themes of the component should be a substantial focus of both class time and class assignments.

**Educational Goals and Learning Outcomes.** Courses offered as part of this component are explicitly committed to cultivating habits of mind that empower students to negotiate a complex and interconnected world. They entail a self-conscious and critical exploration of diversity in manifold historical and cultural contexts, and through many different disciplinary approaches, but the examination of diversity and/or globalization will be a central theme in every course. This said, it is understood that courses will fulfill this commitment in ways that complement or are consistent with educational goals established in relation to particular disciplinary and interdisciplinary expectations.

Requiring students to complete a Core component dedicated to GE supports several of Colgate’s educational objectives, as envisioned by the AAB, by enabling students to:

- “see themselves honestly and critically with a global and historical perspective”
- “discover complexity and richness through the study of: human behavior, social relations, and institutions ... and the intricate structures of thought and expression that constitute human culture”
- “grow in both confidence and humility, articulating a set of values that respects the diverse perspectives and qualities of others”
- “develop a lifelong curiosity about the world that will encourage continued growth in knowledge and wisdom.”

In addition, courses offered as part of this component will typically make an explicit pedagogical commitment to such intellectual activities as the following:

- understanding the ways in which cultural boundaries are drawn or crossed
- examining – in historical and/or contemporary contexts – processes of intellectual, economic, artistic, material, or social exchange between peoples, societies, and cultures
- undertaking a rigorous consideration of the sometimes fraught nature of unequal distributions of power and privilege according to class, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation and expression, and other significant axes of difference.

With regard to learning outcomes, in completing this component students will:

- develop habits of mind and competencies that will serve them in negotiating a complex, diverse, and interconnected world
- deepen their appreciation of modes of analysis, thought, and/or expression that will in turn inform their understanding of issues relevant to a globalizing and pluralistic world.

**Practical Considerations and Commitments.** We anticipate, based on existing course listings, that courses will be drawn mainly from the divisions of the Humanities, Social Science, and University Studies. Courses from the Natural Sciences and Mathematics may also make valuable contributions to the component. (For upper level courses, prerequisites would have to be satisfied.)

- Assessment should focus on learning goals for the component. It may, however, prove desirable to also engage in more specific assessment designed for courses in each of the separate categories.
- Many study groups offer courses that could meet the goals of this component
- Students may satisfy this component by completing a major requirement that is also on the list of designated courses; furthermore, a course satisfying the GE requirement may double count as a course from one of the three Areas of Inquiry. The CRC anticipates that this will serve less as an “additional” requirement than as a means of structuring the Areas of Inquiry requirement such that students will have additional incentive to take courses that double-count in this way, and departments and programs who want to attract additional students will have an incentive to develop new GE courses.
- Faculty will be encouraged to develop or redesign department and program courses that will satisfy this requirement
- The committee envisions a faculty development seminar, modeled after and scheduled close to the White Eagle retreat, dedicated to the pedagogical challenges and opportunities in teaching a GE course.

There will need to be a process for approving courses in this new component of the Core. We anticipate that this process will require that faculty submit an application that includes such items as a syllabus and a description of how a new, revised, or existing course meets the goals of GE. New courses would go through the GE listing process as well as the standard new course approval process.

The standard for listing a course as GE is that

- the course must include a significant emphasis on globalization and/or diversity
- the GE themes of the component must be a substantial focus of both class time and class assignments.

In the first stage of implementing the new Core, the UNST DD and the UP overseeing GE will establish a group with the responsibility for approving courses for the GE component. This body will have divisional representation. As the program becomes established, the UNST DD may decide



to continue this group or to transfer approval responsibilities to another entity—for instance, to the University Professors meeting as a group.

**Changes from the Current Core.** This new component seeks to respond to the realities of a globalizing world and a multicultural nation. The challenges and opportunities that flow from these realities are not vaguely felt phenomena whose actual presence are found only in distant lands or cosmopolitan centers. Rather they condition the lives of all of us at Colgate. This component thus arises out of our commitment to promoting a faculty, student body, and curriculum that both reflects and explores the diversity of the United States and the interconnected nature of the twenty-first century world.

Mindful of its relationships to all parts of the proposed Core, GE is designed to complement but not reproduce Communities and Identities. Whereas offerings listed under CI are courses that focus on communities and identities in a particular place, GE courses are typically housed in Departments and Programs and draw attention to, and thereby deepen our students' appreciation of, the complex nature of our interconnected world.

Students are expected to take at least one GE or CI course that is not U.S.-based.

No CI or SP course may double-count to satisfy the GE requirement.

### **Areas of Inquiry (revised Distribution Requirements)**

(The appropriate divisions may revise the definitions associated with each area of inquiry.)

The current Distribution Requirements are designed “to ensure some experience with the characteristic methods of the three academic divisions.” This experience is gained by every student having to take one course in two different departments in each of the three divisions, for a total of six courses.

While the CRC acknowledges that the existing Distribution Requirements do give students some exposure to a variety of courses across the campus, there was consensus on the committee that they do not, as described, necessarily introduce students to the characteristic methods of the three divisions. Moreover, they ensure experience with only three of the four academic divisions.

The CRC recommends retaining a breadth requirement, and proposes the “Areas of Inquiry” components. Students will take two courses in each of three components: Human Thought and Expression (initially, departmental courses from the Humanities Division as well as approved courses within programs and/or from other departments); Social Relations, Institutions, and Agents (initially, departmental courses from the Social Sciences Division as well as approved courses within programs and/or from other departments); and Natural Science and Mathematics (initially, departmental courses from the Natural Sciences/Mathematics Division as well as approved courses within programs and/or from other departments). A student's six Areas of Inquiry courses must be selected from six different departments or programs. Areas of Inquiry courses can count toward a major or minor.

Over time, we recommend that these components be determined by the method or content of individual courses, rather than by the divisional home of the department that offers the courses. Decisions on whether a course from outside a division should be listed as falling in the division's “area of inquiry” should be made by the Division Director in consultation with the divisional chairs.

### *Component 6: Human Thought and Expression*

**Description.** Courses in this component develop an understanding of what it means to be human: they focus on cultural and intellectual expressions of people throughout time. To satisfy this requirement, students will be able to select any two Human Thought and Expression courses from two different departments or programs. Most courses from the following departments satisfy this area requirement: Art and Art History, Classics, East Asian Languages and Literatures, English, German, Music, Philosophy, Religion, Romance Languages, and Russian. Approved courses from other departments and interdisciplinary programs may also satisfy the Human Thought and Expression Area of Inquiry requirement.

**Intellectual Rationale.** In this component, students will explore the varied ways that humans understand and express themselves. Courses in this component examine the ways that human beings have expressed themselves through literature, art, and music; through rituals, symbols, and languages; through analysis, dialogue, and debate. They grapple with the ideas and attitudes that have come to humans in periods of introspection and reflection as well as those that have arisen from discourse and exchange. Courses in the humanities sharpen students' critical faculties by developing their ability to analyze, criticize, and synthesize; improve their ability to communicate by focusing on reading, writing, speaking, and clear thinking; enhance their ability to express themselves in English and foreign languages alike; alert students to cultural and individual difference through the study of varied civilizations; foster their appreciation of the ideas and expressions of others; develop students' capacity to understand their relationship to themselves, to others, to the past and the future, to the natural and supernatural.

### *Component 7: Social Relations, Institutions, and Agents*

**Description.** Courses in this component expose students to the study of social order and human behavior in societies of the past and present. To satisfy this requirement, students will be able to select any two Social Relations, Institutions, and Agents courses from two different departments or programs. Most courses from the following departments satisfy this area requirement: Economics, Educational Studies, Geography, History, Political Science, and Sociology and Anthropology. Approved courses from other departments and interdisciplinary programs may also satisfy the Social Relations, Institutions, and Agents Area of Inquiry requirement.

**Intellectual Rationale.** In this component, students will explore the systematic study of human behavior and the various social structures and institutions that have both shaped and been shaped by human interaction. The courses in this component approach these topics at a number of levels of analysis, ranging from individual behavior, to groups, to societal institutions and processes. These courses provide students with a more thoughtful perspective on the behaviors and institutions that they encounter every day. In addition, the disciplines represented in this component have developed a rich set of tools for interpreting and analyzing human behaviors and institutions; through exposure to these disciplines, students will acquire new frameworks for interpretation and analysis.

### *Component 8: Natural Science and Mathematics*

**Description.** Courses in this component apply theoretical and empirical methods to the study of living organisms, the physical world, and abstract and practical mathematics. To satisfy this

requirement, students will be able to select any two Natural Science and Mathematics courses from two different departments or programs. Most courses from the following departments satisfy this area requirement: Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Geology, Mathematics, Physics and Astronomy, and Psychology. Approved courses from other departments and interdisciplinary programs may also satisfy the Natural Science and Mathematics Area of Inquiry requirement.

**Intellectual Rationale.** An educated student should have an understanding of the general methods and broad content of a sub-field within mathematics and the sciences. The purpose of this component is to expose students to the methodologies of theoretical, experimental, and field research within the context of a specific area of study in mathematics and the physical and life sciences. The focus is on concepts and principles of science specific to the field being studied, including the use of quantitative techniques to understand the material. Being exposed to some essential principles and the means used to discover such principles will deepen students' understanding and appreciation of scientific creativity and discovery. These courses will also foster curiosity about the reality of nature, demonstrate the value of empirical and quantitative methods for defining and solving problems, and foster insight into how scientific and mathematical knowledge is integrated within a field of study.

## Core Distinction

Core Distinction has been a valuable part of the Core program for several years. However, this proposal mandates the elimination of this component for the following reasons:

- establishing the new Core component, Global Engagements, makes additional demands on staffing that might well diminish the faculty's ability to offer a sustainable menu of Distinction courses
- many of the courses now offered as Distinction can, with appropriate modifications if necessary, contribute to the proposed components dedicated to Communities and Identities, Global Engagements, or Scientific Perspectives on the World. Others may continue as courses in interdisciplinary programs or, in some cases, divisional or departmental courses

## Distinction in the Liberal Arts Core (revised High Distinction)

**Description.** Students can earn Distinction in the Liberal Arts Core by establishing a distinguished commitment to the Core as well as to their chosen major and expanding on these by successfully completing the Distinction seminar.

*To enroll in the Distinction seminar* students must achieve a 3.33 or better GPA in the Core Components 1-5: Legacies of the Ancient World, Challenges of Modernity, Scientific Perspectives on the World, Communities and Identities, and Global Engagements. For students completing two or more courses satisfying a particular component, only the first course completed contributes to this GPA. To be selected for the Distinction seminar, students must also be engaged in departmental honors projects at the time that the Distinction seminar begins meeting.

*To earn Distinction* candidates must further:

- earn a grade of A- or better in the Distinction seminar
- earn departmental honors with the completion of the department honors project
- achieve an overall GPA of 3.33 or better at the time of graduation

**Intellectual Rationale and Pedagogical Expectations.** The goal of the Distinction program is to complement honors work in departments and programs by giving students the opportunity to reflect on the broader, interdisciplinary contexts of their honors projects. Through readings assigned by the seminar instructors, students explore the methodologies of their own and other disciplines. Each student writes a substantial interdisciplinary paper relevant to the student's departmental honors work. This requirement may be satisfied in *one* of the following ways:

- by extending a departmental honors project to explore interdisciplinary perspectives on the project topic or to examine the social implications or historical foundations of the project
- by self-consciously considering the generation and evaluation of knowledge in the major
- by collaborating with one or more members of the seminar to explore themes common to the students' departmental projects.

**Educational Goals and Learning Outcomes.** In pursuing Distinction in the Liberal Arts Core students will:

- reflect on the broader, interdisciplinary contexts of their honors projects
- explore the methodologies of their own and other disciplines.

**Practical Considerations and Commitments.** The Distinction seminar is typically

- capped at 13 students
- led by two faculty (preferably from different Divisions)
- offered in the Spring semester.

The Distinction seminar leaders

- are selected by the director of the Division of University Studies and will normally be from different divisions.
- coordinate the application and selection process for students who wish to enroll in the seminar.

**Changes to the Current Program.** We are proposing that this component be renamed simply "Distinction" because with the elimination of the current program's Distinction option the modifier "High" is no longer needed.

The proposal increases the current program requirements for enrolling in the Distinction seminar by adding one course to those contributing to the GPA for eligibility. Additionally, the proposal clarifies and increases the current program requirements for earning Distinction by explicitly stating that students must complete departmental honors projects and earn honors by doing so. (The current program has required that students complete department honors, and, with rare exception, students have successfully earned department honors.) Remaining requirements and structures for Distinction are unchanged from the present program.

## First-Year Seminars

**Description and Intellectual Rationale.** First-year seminars (FSEMs) are designed to introduce students to a variety of liberal arts topics, skills, and ways of learning, including the importance of academic integrity. The FSEM emphasizes all aspects of the learning process including the exploration of individual needs and strengths, interactions with classmates, and the multiplicity of resources beyond the classroom. Special emphasis is placed on improving writing skills and using the library's many resources. The merging of these elements into a single course provides a prime opportunity for the student to obtain a breadth of college-level experience and academic

perspective. FSEMs may count toward the fulfillment of requirements with the Liberal Arts Core Curriculum.

**Pedagogical Expectations.** Mindful that they are designed to address areas of study or ways of learning that vary significantly by course and/or instructor, FSEMs are all expected to:

- require approximately 15 pages of writing, ideally through assignments that ask students to edit and revise their work
- foster information literacy through assignments that emphasize research skills and the use of appropriate resources
- help incoming students to appreciate expectations and responsibilities related to academic honesty.

**Educational Goals and Learning Outcomes.** In addition to satisfying the educational goals and learning outcomes established in relation to a particular intellectual pursuit, course, and/or instructor, students should:

- have a greater awareness of the expectations associated with writing at the university level
- be able to effectively employ research strategies that evidence appropriate levels of information literacy
- have an appreciation of the expectations and responsibilities related to academic honesty.

**Practical Considerations and Commitments.** The following considerations and commitments are especially relevant to FSEM courses and instructors:

- FSEMs are typically capped at 18 incoming students and are offered only in the Fall semester
- every department is expected to contribute faculty to staff the FSEM program
- instructors serve as academic advisors to students enrolled in their seminars until they declare a major
- attention to serving FSEM goals and objectives should be accommodated by appropriately adjusting course content as necessary
- FSEM faculty are required to attend a meeting scheduled during the week before the start of the Fall semester to discuss expectations related to writing, information literacy, and student advising.

**Changes from the Current Program.** While the committee has discussed the institutional role of FSEMs and their relationship to the current Core program, this proposal makes no recommendations for revising the structure of the FSEM program. In particular, we believe that staffing constraints mandate that courses discussed in this proposal can and will be offered as FSEMs into the foreseeable future.

- However, we strongly recommend that pedagogical strategies be explicitly discussed at the annual White Eagle meetings, focusing on how best to adjust content in Core courses in order to accommodate FSEM educational goals.

**Future Directions.** In the long term, the FSEM program would be better positioned to meet its educational and institutional goals by

- reducing enrollment caps from 18 to 15 students.

## Staffing of Core Components

The vitality of the Core program ultimately depends on the willing participation of continuing faculty. The committee hopes that the revised program will continue to be attractive to faculty who already participate and will draw in new faculty, especially in GE, as well.

We urge the administration to provide appropriate incentives/compensation for participation in Core; moreover, we would identify three areas where we encourage continuing efforts to support Core staffing. The first is at the time of hiring. Position descriptions generally include an expectation that new faculty will participate in Core. What may need more emphasis though is the needs of specific Core components. For example, it seems that over time there has been an erosion of faculty positions that focus on the ancient world with a corresponding decrease in the number of faculty who see Core 151 (or the new Legacies course) as their natural home in the Core.

Second, in an ideal world, visiting faculty would not be expected to teach in Core. While temporary replacement positions are often approved based on the ways they preserve a department's contributions to the Core program, we urge that, whenever possible, the added teaching power from replacement positions be used to free continuing faculty to teach in Core instead of having new, temporary faculty being asked to teach in the program.

Finally, there is the question of the role of Category II faculty (both temporary adjuncts and continuing Senior Lecturers) in the Core program. The hiring of such faculty is often linked to spousal employment. Core has traditionally welcomed such faculty, most of whom are superb teachers. There are some concerns though that Core has come to rely too heavily on Category II teaching<sup>5</sup> and that this has been, at least in part, due to departments being less flexible than Core in responding to requests from the Dean's office concerning spousal employment. We would encourage both the administration and departments to be more creative in providing spousal teaching opportunities, particularly initial teaching at Colgate, that do not simply look to slot new adjunct faculty into teaching in the Core program.

### **Imperfect World: CRC's Decisions about Language Study; Quantitative Reasoning; Writing; Information Literacy** *Introduction*

During the revision process the Core Revision Committee examined the existing General Education requirements, i.e., the four required Core classes and existing Distribution Requirements in the Humanities, Social Science, and Natural Science/Mathematics Divisions. In addition to these we asked whether there were specific skills/abilities which were not now, but ideally should be, part of Colgate's liberal arts education. Our study of general education requirements at comparable colleges highlighted areas beyond those Colgate now requires. We found four areas in which students would benefit: a Language other than English, Quantitative Reasoning, Writing, and Information Literacy. For different reasons we concluded that proposing requirements in these areas is not feasible at this time. In what follows we explain briefly the bases for this conclusion. In some cases we identify ways student competency might be advanced both in this proposal and in the future.

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<sup>5</sup> In some cases Category II teaching has been necessary to provide enough sections in a particular semester. In other cases though, Category II teaching has displaced tenure stream faculty who were willing to teach in a component in a particular semester.

## *Language Study*

Living in a world in which countries and peoples are increasingly interconnected calls for an ability to communicate across language barriers. One element in preparing students to live in such a world is ensuring they can speak, read, and write in more than one language.

The Core Revision Proposal distributed in February 2008, proposed a component which would require every student to achieve competency in a language other than English by the time s/he graduated. While many faculty supported such a requirement, others - especially some in language departments - concluded that instituting a more rigorous language requirement was not feasible at this time.

In changes made in response to such feedback the Committee now proposes a way to encourage language competency beyond a high school level as one avenue for fulfilling the new Core component, Global Engagements. Under the present proposal, then, while not all students will be required to study language in college courses, attaining additional language competency will be one way for students to prepare to live in a globalizing world.

In the future, perhaps at the next review of Colgate's general education curriculum, faculty may recommend expanding the language requirements. In the meantime, the Committee recommends two ways to encourage study of languages other than English beyond the high school level. As explained, one is for students to satisfy the Global Engagements requirement by additional study of language. The other is through the advising process. Here faculty have the opportunity to encourage their advisees to pursue more language study at the college level.

## *Quantitative Reasoning*

Educating students for the twenty-first century should insure basic Quantitative Literacy.

In examining the General Education Programs in other liberal arts colleges, we learned that many included a Quantitative Reasoning requirement. To ascertain the feasibility of such a requirement at Colgate, we asked different departments to identify courses which would qualify as Quantitative and Deductive Reasoning. Our working definition for QDR was

*Courses in this category focus on one or more of the following: (a) statistical methods for analyzing and interpreting data; (b) key mathematical concepts; and (c) abstract symbolic manipulation or reasoning based on axiomatic or algorithmic methods.*

*A course may satisfy this requirement by being directly about one of the criteria above. Courses that are primarily content-based will also satisfy the requirement if a primary focus of assignments (including exams) is on requiring students to directly engage in the skills spelled out in the criteria.*

Using a list of courses that seemed to clearly fall within this definition, we examined the transcripts of students who graduated in 2007 and 2008. Most of our students had taken such a course: indeed, a majority had taken more than one QDR course. Still, 87-135 students per graduating class had not taken a QDR course. (The lower number is the class of 2008 in a model where AP credit counted and the higher number is the class of 2007 without allowing counting AP credit.)

Instituting a QR requirement at this time would mean providing an additional five to seven sections of such courses each year. Unlike Global Engagements, however, the pool of QDR courses and faculty who teach in them is relatively small. Furthermore, many of the faculty who teach QDR courses already devote a significant proportion of their teaching time to those courses and would find it difficult to offer additional sections. The bottom line is that, while the resources to implement QDR may not be terribly large, the resources needed to institute QDR would need to be incremental.

We recommend further exploration of instituting a Quantitative Reasoning requirement as resources become available. We would envision QDR as following the model we have put forward for Global engagements: a set of courses that would overlap with Areas of Inquiry and could also fulfill the QDR requirement. Some Scientific Perspectives courses could also count as QDR courses.

*Writing Intensive Program Across the Curriculum*

More opportunities for students to gain experience in learning to write appropriately in different fields is a goal of faculty and a topic that the CRC explored. Earlier in the revision process, after studying writing requirements in various liberal arts colleges, the committee explored the possibility of designating writing intensive courses throughout the curriculum. By writing intensive course we mean a course that not only asks students to write - as many courses, including Core and FSEMs, already do - but a course that focuses on the writing process, especially in asking students to revise work in response to critique and comment. Although we found significant faculty interest, implementing even a modest writing requirement would demand more resources, including additional faculty, than is feasible presently. The necessity to cap writing intensive courses at 15, the recommended class size for such courses, is daunting, as the model shows.

Assuming that a writing intensive (WI) course (15 students maximum) should be taken in the first two semesters and hence might be drawn equally from Core courses, 100-level courses, and 200-level courses from throughout the curriculum, a writing requirement would necessitate the designation of 51 WI sections. It would further require an addition of 19 sections or four faculty positions to absorb the displaced students when section sizes were reduced.

<b>Number of annual Writing Intensive (WI) sections necessary for Requirement.</b>		
Students per grad. class	Students per WI course	Required # of WI courses
750	15	51



<b>Number of WI sections as well as new non-WI sections of Core, 100-level, and 200-level courses that must be created if Writing Intensive Requirement is introduced.</b>		
# of Core Courses designated as WI	# of 100-level courses designated as WI	# of 200 level courses designated as WI
17	17	17
Avg. Enrollment of Core Courses	Avg. Enroll of 100-level courses	Avg. Enrollment of 200 level courses
22.8	25.9	20.6
Students displaced per Core class by conversion to WI	Students displaced per 100-level class by conversion to WI	Students displaced per 200-level class by conversion to WI
7.8	10.9	5.6
# of add. Core courses needed to absorb displaced students	# of add. 100-level courses needed to absorb displaced students	# of add. 200-level courses needed to absorb displaced students
6	8	5

Implementing a Writing Intensive Program Across the Curriculum is a high priority and should be re-examined within the next few years as resources might become available. Until then, our committee recommends that faculty direct our attention to ways of improving student writing. All faculty share responsibility for students' writing skills. Surely, the Core Program is one place where there is, and should be, attention to writing, but students must continue to learn to write throughout their four years.

### *Information Literacy*

An introduction to Information Literacy should continue to take place in First Year Seminars. Although some Core components will emphasize library research and other forms of gathering information, others stress text-based analysis and comparison. Responsibility for more advanced research and data gathering lies with departments and programs, especially for majors and minors. Since research methodology often differs by field, students are expected to be introduced to more advanced research techniques in their major areas of study.

### **Assessment**

Each of the existing Core components has developed and implemented an assessment plan as part of Colgate's overall program of assessing student learning outcomes. This assessment will continue in the new program. The proposal is explicit in outlining

- how each component relates to the AAB's current draft of Goals for a Liberal Arts Education
- each component's Educational Goals and Learning Outcomes, and
- expectations for what students should achieve in each component.

This explicit framework should prove helpful in fostering enhanced assessment for each component. The details of assessment, instruments, rubrics, etc., will be developed by the appropriate UP in consultation with the component's staff.

Colgate's approach to assessment has, at least to date, focused on assessment at the level of individual administrative units, i.e., department and program majors and individual Core

components. If the university decides to move towards more holistic assessment, then such a plan should surely include analysis of how the overall Core program, including Areas of Inquiry, contributes to the goals of a liberal arts education. The Core program itself, in conjunction with the Divisions (for the Areas of Inquiry components), may want to take the lead on developing more holistic assessment. If this happens, however, it will be important to remember that all courses at Colgate contribute in one or more ways to the goals drafted by the AAB and that the Core program should not, and cannot, be expected to carry the entire burden of achieving the university's educational goals.

## **Implementation**

If approved by the end of this academic year (May 2009) the new Core will likely go into effect in the Fall of 2010 for the class of 2014. However, if approved by May, aspects of the new Core and piloted courses may be phased in on a trial basis in the 2009-10 year. New and revised courses for Legacies, Modernity, SP, and CI can be handled with present administrative structures (i.e. utilizing the University Professors and the Curriculum Committee). A method for designating GE courses is described in the section explaining the Global Engagements component..

## **The Role of this Proposal and Periodic Updates**

At the time that the faculty votes on Core *Catalogue* copy brought by AAB, we will also ask that the faculty endorse, by means of a sense of the faculty resolution, this document as the full proposal from the Core Revision Committee. Once endorsed by the faculty, this proposal will become the guiding document for the Core program. It represents the plan for the new Core – covering not just the legislated aspects - the basic content/structure of the program and what courses are required for graduation – but also more detailed goals and plans for each component that should not simply be frozen by legislation in ways that prevent the program from adapting and improving over long periods of time. Because this proposal is a plan for the future, the University Studies Division Director and the University Professors should review the proposal and the program every three years and report to the faculty if the program or its components evolve in ways that are not envisioned in this proposal. They should also report to the faculty in the third year of the program concerning any issues that arise in either the implementation or the initial assessment of the Global Engagements component.