

BREADTH REQUIERMENT FOR CORE COURSES

2003 CORE ADVISORY BOARD Recommendation

The Core Advisory Board, made up of the chairs of all six area committees (Communication, Math and Science, Humanities, Philosophy, Visual and performing Arts and Social Sciences), met on April 29, 2003 and unanimously agreed on the following resolution.

In order to assure that courses approved for the CORE curriculum possess adequate breadth and are not so specialized as to deprive USF students of general introductions to academic areas they may be unfamiliar with, the committee recommends adding a breadth requirement to all courses submitted for CORE approval.

Justification: The CAB discussed the various reasons why this policy is necessary. Here is a summary:

1. Students who are not arts majors may receive their only exposure to the humanities and social sciences in the CORE. Thus it would be wise for faculty to distinguish between specialized courses that are relevant only for majors in any given area, and general, introductory courses that would provide any kind of student with a broad introduction to an academic discipline. Only the latter kinds of courses should be offered in the CORE.
2. Although the current CORE is outcome driven and based on a kind of menu model, the CAB feels that it is nevertheless necessary to establish criteria that would prevent a "balkanized" CORE, that is one which becomes incoherent because it contains so many different and sundry courses. A breadth requirement will not assure complete coherence, but it may be able to put a check on the tendency toward fragmentation.
3. Without a breadth requirement, faculty and departments have too many negative incentives to push all kinds of courses into the CORE. In order to get Student Credit Hours, departments are awarded for having as many courses as possible approved for the CORE. So a breadth requirement should also cut down on turf battles.
4. The CAB feels that there are sound pedagogical reasons for offering basic CORE courses with breadth and depth, rather than specialty courses that may reflect the narrower academic interests of any particular faculty member. A breadth requirement would allow the area committees to work with faculty who submit such courses to broaden them out and transform specialty into more general courses.
5. The CAB recommends that any faculty member, whose course is rejected by the area committees by reason of insufficient breadth, will enjoy all the rights of appeal that are currently in place in the Core Curriculum procedure.
6. The CAB finally recommends that courses already approved by the provost be subject to re-evaluation. In order to be fair, faculty members, whose courses have already been approved, would be asked to consider voluntarily broadening the subject matter of their courses in order to satisfy the new breadth requirement.

Submitted to the Provost on May 2, 2003. Dr. Wisner approved this recommendation on May 15, 2003.