

**USF's Redesigned Undergraduate Core  
Curriculum**

**Core Redesign Task Force**

February 2026

## **Executive Summary**

USF's Undergraduate Core Curriculum, adopted in 2002, has long served as the mission-centered foundation of a USF education. In alignment with the 2027 Strategic Plan (Goal 1: Reimagine a Jesuit Education), the University completed a comprehensive, multi-year redesign. The proposed outcome is a streamlined, integrated, and mission-explicit **40-credit Core Curriculum**, designed to:

- **Embed high-impact and experiential learning** across the student journey;
- **Integrate key proficiencies and applied problem-solving** (including AI/digital fluency);
- **Reduce excess credit burden** and address “Core credit creep”;
- **Increase coherence** from the initial year through the final semesters;
- **Strengthen transfer pathways** and time-to-degree feasibility;
- **Make Jesuit identity more visible and measurable** in curriculum design.

The redesigned Core is scheduled to launch for **new entering students in Fall 2027**, following the implementation phase (2025–2027).

## **Purpose and Process**

The redesign has followed a three-phase structure to ensure rigor, transparency, and shared governance, with participation from faculty, staff, librarians, students, and academic leadership.

**Phase I: Discovery (2023–2024)** — review of the current Core (“mirror”) and comparative study of peer institutions (“window”).

**Phase II: Design (2024–2025)** — development and refinement of new models through campus engagement and governance review.

**Phase III: Implementation (2025–2027)** — course development, faculty formation, assessment design, advising alignment, and staged rollout.

## **Research and Stakeholder Engagement**

The redesign of the Undergraduate Core was grounded in a structured, multi-method research process combining institutional data analysis, survey research, comparative benchmarking, and structured community engagement. The work was conducted in partnership with the Office of Institutional Data and Analytics (OIRA) and the Office of Assessment and Accreditation Support (OAAS) to ensure methodological rigor and alignment with assessment and accreditation standards.

## **Discovery Phase (“Mirror”): Institutional Analysis and Survey Research**

The Discovery phase examined how the current Core operates in practice. The Task Force analyzed data from OIRA on enrollment patterns, credit loads, instructional staffing patterns (full- and part-time distribution), transfer pathways, AP/IB fulfillment trends, and the integration of Core courses within majors. This analysis provided a structural understanding of credit burden, course capacity, and equity considerations.

In parallel, OAAS partnered with the Task Force to design and administer a university-wide survey via Qualtrics in early 2024. The survey was distributed to all undergraduate and graduate students, as well as faculty, staff, and librarians.

The survey examined:

- Perceived gains from a USF education
- Importance of current Core learning outcomes
- Essential skills and competencies for graduates
- High-impact educational practices (internships, research, service learning, etc.)
- Classroom practices that promote engagement
- Perceptions of mission-aligned learning, including justice, diversity, and Jesuit identity

### **Survey participation overview**

A total of **1,239 students** responded (68% undergraduate; 32% graduate), representing all major schools and colleges. Undergraduate respondents included students from Arts & Sciences, Management, and Nursing & Health Professions in proportions broadly reflective of institutional distribution.

Additionally, **253 faculty, staff, and librarians** responded. Of those respondents, 75% reported teaching in the Core, and over half have taught at USF for more than a decade, providing substantial experience-based insight into curricular strengths and challenges.

The volume and distribution of responses provide a robust institutional snapshot across stakeholder groups. Detailed demographic tables and question-level findings appear in Appendix A.

## **Discovery Phase (“Window”): Comparative Institutional Research and Community Input**

To situate USF within national trends, the Task Force conducted structured comparative research on peer institutions across multiple categories: Jesuit universities (e.g., Seattle University, Georgetown University, Boston College,

Gonzaga University, Loyola University Chicago, Santa Clara University); private liberal arts and mission-driven institutions (e.g., Macalester College, Bates College, Elon University, Baylor University, University of San Diego); and public research universities (e.g., UCLA, UC Davis, UC Santa Cruz).

For each institution, the Task Force analyzed:

- Core structure (distribution, integrative, hybrid)
- Total credit requirements and sequencing models
- Stated learning outcomes and competencies
- Integration of high-impact practices
- Transfer student policies
- Mission framing and communication strategies
- Incorporation of digital fluency or technological competencies

Research was conducted through institutional websites, academic catalogs, public assessment materials, and structured comparison templates developed by the Task Force. This benchmarking revealed that hybrid models, combining integrative interdisciplinary experiences with distributive breadth, have become the dominant national approach, particularly among institutions seeking coherence, mission articulation, and transfer clarity.

A full list of comparator institutions and analytic criteria appears in Appendix B.

During the Discovery phase, the Core Redesign Task Force also engaged the university community in structured dialogue to surface perspectives on the current Core and to build transparency in the review process. Engagement included a Provost-hosted Chat & Chai forum in fall; public presentations of Mirror and Window findings; survey findings briefings; and three open listening sessions (virtual and in-person) in spring 2024. These sessions were open to faculty, staff, librarians, and students and were designed to gather community reflections on the strengths and limitations of the current Core, identify shared priorities, and build trust in the redesign process. An anonymous Qualtrics feedback instrument accompanied the listening sessions to allow broader participation. Feedback collected during Discovery was synthesized and shared with the Task Force and Advisory Group to inform Phase II design principles.

### **Design Phase: Community Engagement and Model Testing**

During Phase II, the Task Force translated Discovery findings into draft Core models and tested them through broad campus engagement and governance review. Input from faculty, staff, librarians, and students—gathered through open community sessions, student consultations (including ASUSF), and a structured feedback form—guided refinement of the proposed hybrid model. The Task Force synthesized this feedback alongside Provost input and advanced a final model through formal review by the Joint University Curriculum Committee (JUCC) and a non-binding USFFA faculty referendum.

## **Discovery Phase: Findings and Recommendations**

### **1. The current Core lacks coherence as an integrated experience.**

Although formally unified, the current Core operates as a collection of parallel requirements. Course sizes vary widely; some areas are embedded within majors while others stand alone; and students often experience the Core as a checklist rather than a sequenced intellectual journey.

**Implication:** The redesigned Core needed a visible intellectual arc, with integrative experiences that frame and connect learning across years.

### **2. The effective credit burden constrains opportunity.**

While described as 44 credits, the effective burden for many students is substantially higher once sequencing, duplicative fulfillment patterns, and embedded requirements are considered. This is especially acute in high-unit majors and limits flexibility for study abroad, internships, and double majors.

**Implication:** Credit reduction and structural clarity had to be central to redesign, improving time-to-degree and access to high-impact experiences.

### **3. Instructional capacity is uneven across Core areas.**

Discovery analysis showed significant variation in who delivers Core courses. In several areas, particularly Philosophy, Ethics, Visual and Performing Arts, and Rhetoric and Composition, a majority of sections are taught by part-time faculty. Other areas, such as laboratory sciences and Theology, have higher proportions of full-time faculty involvement.

This distribution is not inherently problematic; however, it has implications for curricular consistency, faculty formation, advising continuity, and long-term sustainability of Core reform.

**Implication:** Any redesign must account for faculty capacity and instructional distribution, ensuring that implementation is feasible, sustainable, and aligned with institutional priorities.

### **4. Stakeholders strongly agree on educational priorities.**

Students, faculty, staff, and librarians consistently prioritized communication skills, critical and creative thinking, teamwork, problem solving, and exposure to diverse perspectives. Experiential learning and real-world application ranked highly across constituencies.

**Implication:** The redesign should build on shared commitments rather than introduce new ones, strengthening applied learning and interdisciplinary connection.

## **5. Students want learning they can apply.**

Internships, problem-based learning, research, and community engagement were consistently endorsed. Students value challenge and intellectual rigor, but they also seek clearer connections between classroom learning and post-graduate pathways.

**Implication:** High-impact practices must be structurally embedded rather than peripheral.

## **6. Mission is valued but not consistently visible.**

Students strongly support justice-oriented and ethical learning, yet do not consistently identify these experiences explicitly as “Jesuit values.” The gap appears to be one of articulation rather than alignment.

**Implication:** The redesigned Core should make mission and its Jesuit roots explicit, measurable, and coherently framed across the curriculum.

## **7. National benchmarking emphasizes integration and coherence.**

Comparative research showed a national shift toward hybrid models that combine disciplinary breadth with interdisciplinary integrative courses. Institutions that most clearly articulated their Core’s value emphasized sequencing, mission framing, high-impact practices, and transfer clarity.

**Implication:** USF should adopt a hybrid, sequenced model that integrates mission, experiential learning, and disciplinary depth.

## **8. Peer institutions consistently articulate shared core competencies across the curriculum.**

Across Jesuit, liberal arts, and public institutions reviewed, Core curricula emphasize foundational competencies such as written and oral communication, critical thinking, mathematical and quantitative reasoning, second language proficiency, and information literacy. These competencies are typically framed as institution-wide learning goals rather than confined to individual departments.

**Implication:** USF’s Core should articulate university-wide learning goals and ensure that key competencies are intentionally threaded across multiple courses rather than concentrated in isolated requirements.

## **9. Values and themes are most effective when scaffolded across years.**

Many peer institutions organize their Core curricula by tier or level (often structured as Foundations, Explorations, and Integrations) and frame courses around central questions such as equity, global perspective, identity, truth-seeking, and purpose. Institutional values are woven across multiple courses rather than assigned to a single requirement. Strong models emphasize a shared initial-year experience to establish intellectual and ethical grounding.

**Implication:** The redesigned Core should scaffold values and competencies across the student journey, beginning with a signature initial-year experience and culminating in integrative application.

## **10. Clear pathways, digital fluency, and communication strengthen Core identity.**

Peer institutions increasingly emphasize transparent transfer pathways, intentional communication about the purpose of the Core (including outreach to families), and integration of digital and information fluency as cross-cutting competencies.

**Implication:** Implementation of the redesigned Core should include clear transfer structures, an intentional communication strategy, and integration of digital fluency throughout the curriculum.

## **11. Community engagement reinforced and sharpened redesign priorities.**

Structured dialogue during the Discovery phase confirmed the major findings of data analysis and benchmarking while clarifying several areas requiring particular attention. Participants emphasized the importance of framing the Core as a coherent intellectual vision rather than a checklist of requirements; embedding experiential learning visibly and intentionally; addressing credit burden and transfer pathways; foregrounding Jesuit identity more explicitly; aligning redesign with faculty capacity and instructional distribution; and responding to evolving student needs, including digital fluency and career-connected learning.

**Implication:** The redesign must not only restructure requirements but also improve articulation, sustainability, and student-facing clarity, ensuring that mission, experiential learning, faculty engagement, and transfer flexibility are visibly integrated into the Core.

**Summary recommendations:** Taken together, the Discovery research and community engagement findings indicate strong alignment across students, faculty, staff, and librarians regarding the enduring value of a liberal arts education grounded in communication, critical inquiry, collaboration, and

exposure to diverse perspectives. Participants emphasized the need to articulate the Core as a coherent intellectual and Jesuit formation rather than a checklist of requirements, and to communicate its purpose clearly to students and families. Students expressed particular interest in applying their learning through service, internships, research, and community engagement, reinforcing the need to embed high-impact practices structurally rather than peripherally. Feedback also underscored the importance of addressing credit burden and transfer pathways, aligning redesign with faculty capacity, and responding to evolving student needs—including digital fluency and career-connected competencies. Comparative benchmarking further highlights the importance of a coherent hybrid structure that integrates mission, experiential learning, and disciplinary depth. Collectively, these findings point toward a redesigned Core that is coherent, credit-conscious, mission-explicit, competency-threaded, experiential in structure, sustainable in delivery, and clearly communicated.

## **Design Phase: Process and Proposal**

Building on Phase I findings and community engagement, the Design phase (Spring 2024–Spring 2025) translated evidence into structure. The goal was to develop a redesigned Core Curriculum that:

- Reduces effective credit burden
- Creates a coherent intellectual arc
- Makes Jesuit mission explicit
- Embeds high-impact practices
- Aligns with faculty capacity and institutional sustainability

The work was guided by the Strategic Plan and the committee’s charge to articulate a distinctive Jesuit education that equips students for academic, civic, and professional life.

### **Design Process**

**Learning goals:** Building on the findings from Phase I, the Task Force entered Fall 2024 focused on translating shared priorities into a coherent structural model. Early work centered on drafting university-wide Core learning outcomes explicitly rooted in Jesuit values and aligned with the competencies identified in the Discovery phase. These outcomes were designed to prepare students for academic success, ethical discernment, civic engagement, and post-graduate opportunity.

**Model iteration:** With learning goals in place, the Task Force began testing structural models capable of delivering those outcomes. A central design principle was the intentional integration of high-impact practices (community engagement, research, interdisciplinary collaboration, and applied problem-solving) so that experiential learning would be embedded within the Core rather than appended to it. At the same time, the committee examined

structural innovations to support first-time first-year and transfer students, with particular attention to credit efficiency, sequencing, and time-to-degree completion.

Working in three subgroups, members drafted alternative hybrid models that incorporated an initial-year experience, distributive breadth, and integrative components. These subgroup models were shared, critiqued, and synthesized through an iterative process. Over the course of the semester, the Task Force reviewed more than a dozen structural variations, refining areas of convergence and testing alignment with the Core learning goals and Phase I findings.

**Initial-Year Experience:** By the end of Fall 2024, consensus emerged around the importance of a signature Initial-Year Experience that would establish intellectual coherence, foster belonging, and anchor the Core in mission. This evolved into what is now the Golden Gateway sequence, initially conceived as a humanities-centered “Transformative Texts” course paired with an interdisciplinary, experiential course grounded in the San Francisco Bay Area. This structure was designed to integrate core learning outcomes, interdisciplinary inquiry, experiential engagement, and mission formation from the outset of a student’s academic journey.

**Hybrid structures:** In Spring 2025, the Task Force expanded its focus and developed models for the “middle” years and a culminating integrative experience. Two hybrid structures, each combining integrative and distributive elements, were finalized for structured community review in March.

## **Community and Stakeholder Engagement**

In March 2025, two hybrid Core models were presented to the campus community for structured review. Three open sessions, two in person and one virtual, engaged over 200 faculty, staff, and librarians. Two additional sessions were held with students, including one through ASUSF. Presentation materials and recordings were made publicly available on the Core Redesign website to ensure transparency.

In addition to live discussion, the community was invited to submit structured feedback through a formal response form. Approximately 120 respondents completed the feedback instrument, indicating both a preferred model and recommended refinements.

Community preference was clear. 61.2% supported the Hybrid 3–6 model (three integrative courses and six distributive courses), compared to 24.5% in favor of the Hybrid 2–7 model. This feedback, along with qualitative input from the sessions, guided the Task Force’s refinement of the final proposal.

For details on community engagement, see Appendix C. The [two models](#) presented to the community can be found on the Core Redesign website. A

recording of the presentation can also be found [here](#).

Following a comprehensive review of community and Provost feedback, the Task Force identified recurring themes and areas for refinement. Given the strong support for the 3–6 hybrid model, the Task Force focused its subsequent work on strengthening that structure, enhancing mission visibility, reinforcing communication and quantitative literacies, and ensuring coherence across the student journey.

## **The Proposal: Redesigned Core Curriculum**

The final proposed Core model builds on the community-supported 3–6 hybrid structure while incorporating key refinements in response to stakeholder feedback and institutional priorities. The design retains three Core Integration courses—two in the initial year (Enduring Questions and City as Classroom) and one in the final semesters—reflecting strong support from both the community and the Provost.

In response to identified priorities, the Task Force strengthened several elements of the model:

- Reframed the humanities-based course as **Enduring Questions**, deepening its focus on meaning, justice, and the human condition.
- Confirmed **City as Classroom** as a signature experiential course, intentionally embedding community engagement and applied learning into the initial year.
- Added **Communication for the Common Good** to foreground communication literacies and civic discourse.
- Explicitly integrated ethics within the **Theological and Ethical Inquiry** distribution.
- Added a dedicated **Quantitative and Computational Literacy** distribution area, distinguishing quantitative reasoning from scientific inquiry.

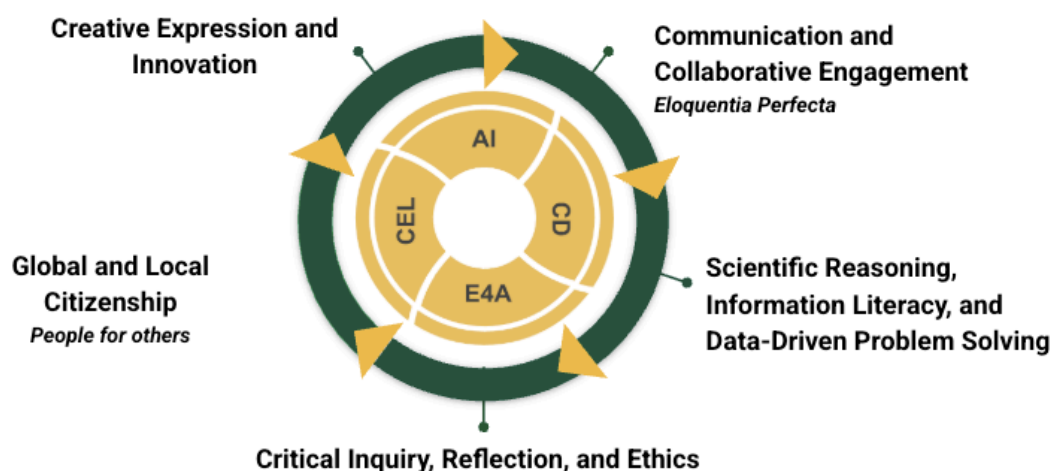
These refinements resulted in a 40-credit Core model that advances coherence, mission clarity, experiential integration, and essential competencies.

## **Core Learning Goals and Proficiencies**

The redesigned Core is anchored in the distinctive strengths of Jesuit Catholic education: formation of the whole person, commitment to justice, and education oriented toward the common good. For the first time, the Core is framed by university-wide learning goals rooted explicitly in mission. The five learning goals are:

- **Communication and Collaborative Engagement:** Grounded in *eloquentia perfecta*, students develop the ability to communicate with clarity, empathy, and integrity across differences.

- **Scientific Reasoning, Information Literacy, and Data-Driven Problem Solving:** Students cultivate rigorous inquiry and ethical discernment in navigating science, technology, data, and emerging AI systems.
- **Critical Inquiry, Reflection, and Ethics:** Drawing on *cura personalis*, students engage enduring human questions, develop ethical reasoning, and reflect deeply on purpose and responsibility.
- **Global and Local Citizenship:** Students become “people for others” through community engagement, interdisciplinary inquiry, and evidence-based approaches to justice.
- **Creative Expression and Innovation:** Inspired by *magis*, students develop creative and innovative capacities oriented toward human dignity and the greater good.



*Core Learning Goals and Proficiencies*

## Four Mission-Integrated Proficiencies

In addition to learning goals, four proficiencies ensure students develop essential competencies across the curriculum. The first two currently exist as course designations, and the second two will be integrated moving forward.

- Community-Engaged Learning (CEL)
- Cultural Diversity (CD)
- AI and Digital Proficiency (AI)
- Entrepreneurship for All Skills (E4A)

## Redesigned Core Curriculum Structure

The proposed 40-unit model combines interdisciplinary integration with disciplinary depth through a sequenced hybrid structure. The Core is intentionally bookended by interdisciplinary integration courses, creating a visible intellectual arc from entry to graduation. Students begin with the Golden Gateway in the initial year and return to interdisciplinary learning in their final semesters through an Applied Problem-Solving culminating seminar. This structure promotes coherence across the student journey, helping students build interdisciplinary habits of mind early and synthesize learning at the culmination of their studies.

### **Golden Gateway (Initial Year)**

Our signature three-course sequence reflects both our location in San Francisco and our Jesuit mission:

- **Enduring Questions** – humanities-based inquiry into justice, freedom, and the good life.
- **City as Classroom** – experiential engagement using the Bay Area as a living laboratory for community-based and critical analysis.
- **Communication for the Common Good** – civic communication rooted in *eloquentia perfecta*.

Together, these courses foster belonging, shared purpose, and applied learning from the outset, all key contributors to student engagement and retention.

### **Bridge to Exploration (Middle Years)**

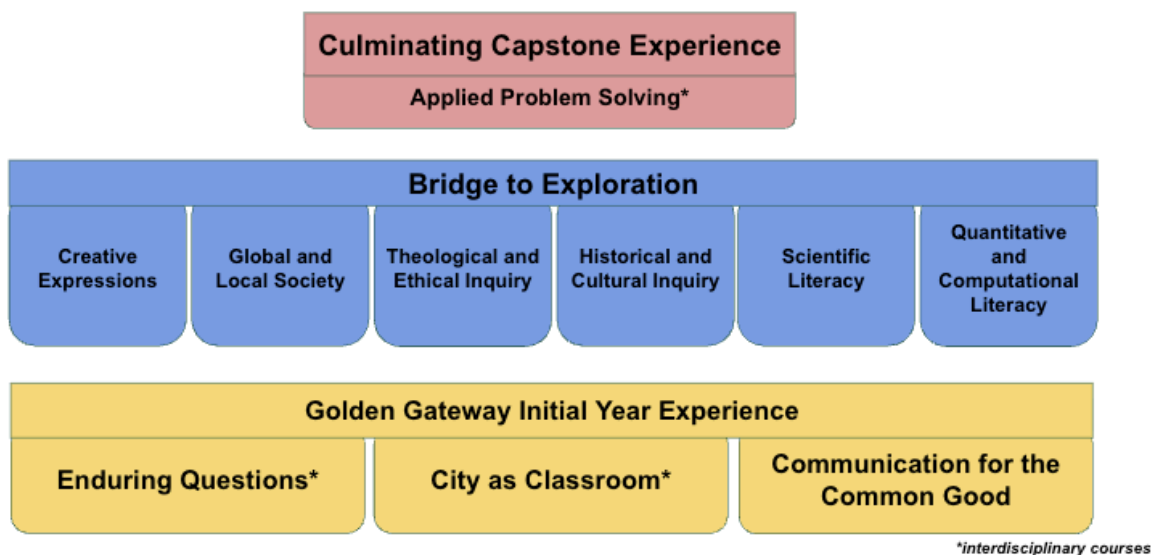
Students then complete six distributive areas that ensure liberal arts breadth:

- Creative Expressions
- Historical and Cultural Inquiry
- Theological and Ethical Inquiry
- Global and Local Society
- Scientific Literacy
- Quantitative and Computational Literacy

These areas cultivate diverse ways of knowing while maintaining strong foundations in the arts, humanities, sciences, and social sciences.

### **Applied Problem-Solving (Culminating course)**

In the final stage, students complete an interdisciplinary, project-based course addressing complex real-world challenges. Through research, ethical reasoning, and creative innovation, students integrate knowledge from their major and the Core to analyze and address complex real-world issues.



*Redesigned Core Curriculum*

## Key Features of the Redesign: Alignment with Phase I Findings

The redesigned Core directly responds to the central findings of the Discovery phase:

- **Establishes a coherent intellectual arc.** In response to concerns that the current Core functions as a checklist, the redesign bookends the curriculum with interdisciplinary integration courses, from the Golden Gateway in the first year to the Applied Problem-Solving seminar, creating continuity and coherence across the student journey.
- **Makes Jesuit mission explicit and visible.** Discovery revealed that students value justice-oriented learning but do not consistently recognize its Jesuit roots. The redesigned Core anchors all courses in shared, mission-driven learning goals and strengthens theology, ethics, and humanities across tiers.
- **Creates shared university-wide learning goals.** Every course maps to common institutional learning goals, replacing a primarily disciplinary structure with a unified framework aligned to mission.
- **Embeds high-impact and experiential learning structurally.** Responding to strong student interest in applied learning, the model integrates experiential components, including City as Classroom, community-engaged learning proficiencies, and the applied problem-solving seminar, within the Core itself.
- **Maintains breadth while preserving disciplinary depth.** Consistent with national benchmarking, the hybrid model balances integrative courses with six distributive areas spanning the arts, humanities, sciences, and

social sciences, including robust representation from Theology, Religious Studies, and Philosophy.

- **Strengthens quantitative, digital, and contemporary literacies.** In response to evolving student needs and information literacy gaps identified in Discovery, the redesign adds Quantitative and Computational Literacy and incorporates AI and digital proficiency.
- **Improves structural clarity and sustainability.** The final model reflects attention to credit burden, sequencing, transfer pathways, and instructional capacity, ensuring feasibility, flexibility, and alignment with institutional priorities.

## **Support for the Redesigned Core Curriculum Model**

The redesigned Core Curriculum reflects broad institutional engagement and governance review. Representatives from every school and college participated through the Core Redesign Task Force structure, alongside student representatives (including ASUSF) and deans.

On May 15, 2025, the Joint University Curriculum Committee (JUCC) voted unanimously (including two votes in absentia) to move the redesigned Core proposal forward to the Provost. A non-binding faculty referendum administered by USFFA invited faculty to indicate whether they could support the redesigned model. Of the 106 respondents, 64% expressed support for the proposal.

The Provost subsequently approved advancement of the proposal to Phase III: Implementation.

## **Phase III: Implementation**

The redesigned Core Curriculum is scheduled to launch with the incoming Fall 2027 class.

### **Implementation roadmap (2025–2027)**

Implementation will focus on operationalizing the approved model through coordinated academic, administrative, and faculty development efforts, including:

- Finalizing policies and practices in collaboration with existing curricular approval structures
- Developing and approving new and revised Core courses
- Supporting faculty development and mission formation workshops
- Establishing assessment frameworks aligned with the Core Learning Goals
- Ensuring advising, catalog, and administrative alignment
- Providing clear and ongoing communication to faculty, students, and staff
- Monitoring pilot efforts and incorporating continuous improvement

processes

### **Phase III deliverables**

By 2027, the university will have:

- A fully operational redesigned Core Curriculum with approved courses and prepared faculty
- Updated academic and advising materials that clearly communicate requirements
- A faculty development infrastructure supporting teaching excellence within the Core
- A functioning assessment system aligned with accreditation standards
- A sustainable governance and review structure for ongoing refinement

### **Conclusion**

The Core redesign represents a comprehensive, collaborative effort to renew USF's undergraduate educational experience. Grounded in Discovery findings, informed by national benchmarking, and shaped through sustained community engagement, the proposed model advances our mission in visible and measurable ways. The redesigned Core strengthens coherence, embeds experiential learning, and makes Jesuit values explicit across the curriculum. It establishes a shared intellectual journey that promotes belonging, integration, and reflection from entry to graduation. At the same time, the model positions USF competitively among peer institutions by demonstrating how liberal arts education, mission integration, and contemporary competencies—including digital fluency and interdisciplinary problem-solving—can coexist within a unified structure. This redesign renews USF's academic identity and affirms our distinctive place in the Bay Area. It responds to the realities of today's students while preparing them for leadership, ethical discernment, and service in tomorrow's world.

Respectfully,

Core Redesign Task Force Phase I and Phase II Members

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- Annie Pho, Head of Instruction and Outreach, Gleeson Library
- David Wolber, Professor, Computer Science, College of Arts & Sciences
- Eve-Anne Doohan, Associate Professor, Communication Studies, College of Arts & Sciences
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- John Joseph Hurley, Assistant Professor, Nursing, School of Nursing & Health Professions

- John P. Fitzgibbons, S.J., Chancellor and Chief Mission Officer
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- Joshua Gamson, Professor, Sociology, College of Arts & Sciences (Phase II: Tri-Chair)
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- Teresa Moore, Associate Professor, Media Studies, College of Arts & Sciences
- Victor Palacios, Director, Data Science Partnerships, Data Institute
- Zoe Wang, Undergraduate Student Representative, ASUSF

## Appendices

### **Appendix A. Discovery Survey: Methodology and Detailed Findings**

#### **Survey Administration and Respondents**

The Core Redesign Task Force (CRTF), in partnership with the Office of Assessment and Accreditation Support (OAAS), administered a university-wide survey during January–February 2024 as part of the Discovery phase. The survey examined gains from a USF education; current Core learning outcomes; essential skills and competencies; high-impact practices (HIPs); and classroom practices that promote engagement. The student survey was distributed via Qualtrics for three weeks between January–February 2024 to all undergraduate and graduate students. The faculty and staff survey was also built in Qualtrics and distributed through the Provost Newsletter, Deans' Offices, and the USFFA newsletter, remaining open for two weeks in February.

A total of 1,239 students responded. Of these, 68% (n=845) were undergraduate students and 32% (n=394) were graduate students. Undergraduate transfer students comprised 3% (n=23) of respondents.

Undergraduate distribution by school:

- College of Arts & Sciences: 67%
- School of Management: 16%
- School of Nursing and Health Professions: 18%

Graduate distribution by school:

- College of Arts & Sciences: 24%
- School of Management: 14%
- School of Nursing and Health Professions: 15%
- School of Education: 33%
- School of Law: 14%

A total of 253 faculty, staff, and librarians responded. Distribution across units was as follows:

- College of Arts & Sciences: 80%
- School of Management: 3%
- School of Nursing and Health Professions: 8%
- School of Education: 1%
- School of Law: 4%
- Staff who do not teach in the Core: 3%

Seventy-five percent of respondents indicated they teach in the Core full-time, and 25% part-time. Fifty-six percent reported teaching at USF for eleven or more

years. Seventy-two percent reported that they often or always teach Core courses.

### **Responses: Gains from USF**

When asked, “What do you hope to gain from being a student at USF? Select all that apply,” students and faculty/staff/librarians were largely aligned (within 10% of each other) in the following areas:

- Getting a degree/credential (92% for both groups; highest ranked response)
- New skills that can be applied in an employment setting
- Networks that will help get a job
- Engagement with a diverse group of people
- New friends
- Faculty mentors
- Understanding themselves and the world

Areas of notable divergence included:

- Engagement with social justice issues (69% faculty/staff/librarians; 43% students)
- Knowledge of Jesuit values (28% faculty/staff/librarians; 14% students)

Subsequent responses suggest that students value justice-oriented and ethical learning but may not consistently identify these under the term “Jesuit values.”

### **Responses: Learning Outcomes**

When asked how important specific Core learning outcomes were to their education, faculty generally rated outcomes more highly than students, with two notable exceptions:

- Gaining skills necessary to link education to service (85% students; 77% faculty/staff/librarians)
- Comprehending variations of people’s relationship with God and developing respect for the religious beliefs of others (40% students; 35% faculty/staff/librarians)

Areas of alignment (within 10%), with faculty somewhat higher, included:

- Understanding and valuing cultural and ethnic differences (roughly 80%)
- Understanding the nature of society and relationships between individuals and groups (roughly 80%)
- Understanding the moral dimension of significant human choice and exposure to opportunities for social justice (roughly 70%)
- Appreciation and critical evaluation of the arts (roughly 60%)

Areas with greater than 10% difference included:

- Being exposed to a wide breadth of academic disciplines (90% faculty/staff/librarians; 69% students)
- Understanding the process of seeking truth and disseminating knowledge through breadth (85% faculty/staff/librarians; 73% students)

Despite the gap, these were the fourth and fifth most selected responses among students.

Understanding historical traditions showed a lower student response rate (65% faculty/staff/librarians; 49% students).

### **Responses: Skills and Competencies**

When asked which skills are essential for a USF graduate, the top three categories for both groups were:

- Written and oral communication (88% students; 97% faculty/staff/librarians)
- Critical and creative thinking (87% students; 96% faculty/staff/librarians)
- Teamwork and problem solving (89% students; 82% faculty/staff/librarians)

Additional areas with close alignment (within 10%) included:

- Intercultural competence and knowledge about social systems (roughly 70%)
- Civic knowledge and engagement (60–65%)
- Knowledge of human cultures (60–65%)
- Data and quantitative literacy (60–65%)
- Knowledge of the physical world (60–65%)
- Technological proficiency (60–65%)

Information literacy showed a notable gap (83% faculty/staff/librarians; 67% students).

### **Response: High-Impact Practices**

When asked which key experiences every USF student should have:

- Internship or field experiences (83% students; 71% faculty/staff/librarians)
- Developing skills and applying learning outside the classroom (55% students)

Collaborative assignments/projects and service learning/community-engaged learning each received over 50% support with close alignment between groups.

Students ranked research with faculty more highly (46%) than

faculty/staff/librarians (26%).

First-year seminars showed divergence (27% students; 40% faculty/staff/librarians).

Other HIPs were within 10% of each other:

- Common intellectual experiences and capstone (roughly 45%)
- Undergraduate research and study abroad (35–40%)
- Learning/living communities and e-portfolios (20–30%)

### **Responses: Engaging Students in Learning**

Students reported higher engagement through active learning methods such as discussion and problem-solving. Lecture engaged roughly two-thirds of students; reading alone engaged roughly one-third. Faculty/staff/librarians ranked reading at 63%.

Group work stimulated learning for 41% of students. Small group discussions showed divergence (73% faculty/staff/librarians; 56% students).

Students ranked informal study groups (55% students; 43% faculty/staff/librarians) and tutoring (33% students; 15% faculty/staff/librarians) higher than faculty estimated.

Students reported high engagement when challenged (84% students; 80% faculty/staff/librarians), and when exposed to diverse perspectives.

All other engagement factors were within five percentage points and exceeded 60% for both groups.

## **Appendix B. Window Research**

### **Institutions Reviewed**

The Window Group reviewed a broad range of institutions, including:

- AJCU institutions: Seattle University; Georgetown University; Boston College; Loyola Marymount University; Gonzaga University; Santa Clara University; Loyola University Chicago
- Private liberal arts institutions: Macalester College; Bates College; Elon University; Baylor University; Chapman University; University of San Diego; University of the Pacific; Hofstra University
- Research universities: Columbia University; Brown University
- Public institutions and UCs: UCLA; UC Davis; UC Santa Cruz

Institutions were selected to represent Jesuit and non-Jesuit, public and private, large and small universities.

## Attributes Examined

For each institution, the Task Force reviewed:

- Mission and Core purpose statements
- Learning outcomes and competencies
- Credit structure and sequencing
- Transfer policies
- Technology integration
- Messaging and marketing of the Core
- Signature or distinctive elements

## Findings

Across institutions:

- Core competencies consistently included written communication, oral communication, quantitative reasoning, information literacy, critical thinking, and often second-language proficiency.
- Many institutions organized their Core around thematic frameworks (e.g., Equitable Thinking; Global Perspective).
- Hybrid models frequently structured learning across tiers such as Foundations, Explorations, and Integrations (e.g., University of San Diego, Loyola Marymount University).
- Some institutions scaffolded Core themes by year (e.g., Gonzaga University's year-based framing questions).
- Strong programs emphasized first-year signature experiences, culminating capstones, and explicit articulation of mission.
- Values and competencies were threaded throughout the curriculum rather than concentrated in single courses.

## Appendix C. Community Engagement

Community engagement during Discovery included:

- Provost Eileen Fung's Chat and Chai session (November 2023)
- Undergraduate Core Curriculum Task Force Window and Mirror Findings presentation (February 26, 2024, via Zoom)
- Survey Findings presentations (April 2 and April 3, 2024)
- Three Core Redesign Listening Sessions organized by the Core Redesign Advisory Group and Provost's Office:
  - March 25, 2024 (virtual)
  - March 27, 2024 (in person, McLaren 250)
  - April 16, 2024 (virtual)

Anonymous [feedback was also collected](#) through the Provost's Office after the listening sessions and responses in aggregate were shared with the Task Force.

Community feedback reinforced the following priorities:

- The Core must be framed as a coherent intellectual vision rather than a checklist.
- Experiential learning should be intentionally embedded.
- Credit burden and transfer pathways require attention.
- Jesuit identity should be more explicitly articulated.
- Faculty capacity must be considered in implementation.
- Digital fluency and career-connected learning are increasingly important.

Community feedback during the Design phase included three public sessions were held to present the proposed models:

- Three information and feedback sessions: March 25, 2025 (in person, Fromm Hall 125, Maraschi Room); March 26, 2025 (Provost's Chat & Chai, McLaren 250 Faculty/Staff Lounge); March 28, 2025 (Zoom session). Over 200 faculty, staff, and librarians attended these sessions.
- Two additional student sessions were held, including one through ASUSF.
- Approximately 120 respondents completed a formal feedback form.

Community feedback yielded the following results:

- Model II (3 integrative courses and 6 distributive courses) received 61.2% support, compared to 24.5% for Model I (2 integrative courses and 7 distributive courses).
- Following review of community and Provost feedback, refinements included:
  - Reframing Transformative Texts as Enduring Questions
  - Adding Communication for the Common Good
  - Explicit integration of ethics in Theological and Ethical Inquiry
  - Adding a dedicated Quantitative and Computational Literacy area
  - Finalizing a 40-credit model