**Mission Statement**

The core curriculum and its general education requirements provide a common academic experience and a breadth of knowledge to every undergraduate student’s program of study. The core curriculum is founded upon courses that develop writing skills, quantitative reasoning, interdisciplinary scholarship, scientific inquiry, public service, and cultural knowledge. The outcomes and assessment are informed by this mission.

**Goals of Tulane’s Core Curriculum**

- Allow students to explore areas of study they might not otherwise access, thus opening up new opportunities for intellectual inquiry and discovery (all areas).
- Prepare students for more focused study by providing a broad base of knowledge and skills (all areas).
- Develop students’ appreciation of the importance of cultures and societies (foreign language, cultural knowledge).
- Foster a commitment to civic responsibility and leadership (public service requirement).
- Provide a means of demonstrating the application of knowledge in a student’s chosen major/program of study (capstone).

In addition, the various areas of the core curriculum have more tailored learning outcomes that are aligned with area course objectives and the expectations of the core as a whole.

**Core Curriculum Learning Outcomes**

Upon completion of Tulane University’s core curriculum, students will be able to:

- Use the tools of rhetorical invention and principles of prose to produce texts.
- Produce texts that combine analysis, argument, and research.
- Produce texts that are coherent.
- Utilize at a basic level the full range of language structures in the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in a germane cultural context.
- Develop logic and reasoning skills and use these to analyze argument.
- Apply logic and mathematical approaches to analyze problems and data.
- Conduct experimental science by collecting and analyzing data in a laboratory setting.
- Articulate how scientific theories are proposed and tested.
- Articulate how cultural development influences the present.
• Analyze creative performance and artistic expression.
• Describe and analyze human society and its institutions, historical processes and events.

**Indicators of student success/assessment of General Education**
• Student Success - retention/graduation rates.
• Academic achievement – successes in acceptance to professional and graduate schools competitiveness in national awards and fellowships.
• Citizenship – survey of students and community partners about the value of service learning and the public service experience.
• Intellectual development - topic-based writing assignment of incoming students and of seniors, and satisfactory completion of a capstone course.
• Self-assessment – questionnaire administered by advisors to assist student with course selection.
• Direct assessment of student learning – samples of student work in various areas to assess competency.
• Faculty assessment of student learning – survey of faculty to canvas their views on meeting the foundational goal.

**Results**
Assessment results will be reviewed by the NTC Curriculum Committee which will make recommendations to the full faculty for curricular change.

**Planned Improvements**
- Recommend to the faculty that to meet the goals of our core curriculum (general education) we should separate into the separate disciplines the Fine Arts and Humanities requirements.
- Form a task force to review our core curriculum.
  - Review and possibly revise the mission statement.
  - Articulate general education learning outcomes.
  - Develop or identify direct measures to assess learning outcomes.
  - Create and execute an assessment plan that would include:
    - Periodic review of core requirements in relation to the mission statement.
    - Periodic review of course syllabi to insure that individual courses do contribute to the mission.
    - Periodically survey faculty on how their courses help satisfy the mission.
    - Periodically survey faculty on how the outcomes/assessments program influences their teaching.
Writing

The ability to communicate arguments in written form is viewed as a critical skill for our students both as a foundation for all degree programs and for success after college.

Learning outcomes

- write clearly (clarity);
- develop structured and unified coherent discussions (coherence);
- organize complex arguments (complexity);
- engage with expert knowledge and scholarly research (content);
- conduct independent bibliographical research (bibliographic skills);
- incorporate that research appropriately into their arguments (incorporation of sources)

Assessment

The English Department will sample papers submitted in ENGL 1010, the Freshman Writing course. A four-person committee chaired by the Director of Freshman Writing used a holistic method of assessing these papers across measures drawn from the research literature in rhetoric and composition:

1. Clarity of Expression
2. Coherence of Composition
3. Complexity of Argument and Analysis
4. Depth of Understanding of Content
5. Bibliographic Skills
6. Incorporation of Independent Research

Each measure is scored on a scale from 5 (excellent) to 1 (unacceptable), factoring expectations for achievement at this course level.

Feedback

The chair of the English Department and Director of Freshman Writing, will review the results of the assessment and planned improvements with the Newcomb-Tulane Dean’s office.

Foreign Language

Tulane students will gain breadth of understanding in both the language and a foreign country’s culture by studying at least one foreign language course at the university, mastering the language at the intermediate-low level as defined by ACTFL (see below).

Learning outcome

For the modern Romance languages the following learning outcome is adopted:

- Students will be able to utilize at a basic level the full range of language structures, in the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing in a germane cultural context.
This corresponds closely with the current ACTFL national guidelines (http://www.actfl.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=4236) at the Intermediate – Low level.

Other languages will vary the outcomes as necessary. For Ancient Latin and Greek languages the following learning outcome is adopted:

- Students will be able to utilize at a basic level the full range of language structures in the skills of reading and writing in a germane cultural context.

Assessment methods

To assess these outcomes each department / language will undertake an assessment procedure every two years – in an agreed-upon rotation starting fall 2009.

- The assessment process will require each member of the language faculty to evaluate student work, coordinated across languages for consistency.
- A sample of exams from the 102 courses will be examined by a panel of faculty from that language, and determinations made about the number (%) which meet, exceed or fall below the expected level of performance.
- In addition to that direct assessment, student evaluation form data reflecting student views on their own learning in these courses will be collected by each language/department and averaged.

Feedback

The data will be communicated to the College and the School respectively, from the aggregate of which an overall assessment of the curricular requirement can be made. The results of that overall assessment will be discussed with the language departments and judgments about planned changes, if any, will be made.

Scientific Inquiry

The ability to analyze data from a scientific perspective is viewed as a critical skill for Tulane students. Students satisfy the Scientific Inquiry component of the core curriculum by completing at least one course in quantitative reasoning and two in the Physical, Life, and Behavioral Sciences, one of which is a laboratory science.

Learning outcomes

- Students will develop logic and reasoning skills and use these to analyze argument.
- Students will apply logic and mathematical approaches to analyze problems and data.
- Students will demonstrate factual knowledge of diverse topics in the specific area of science studies; and gain a basic understanding of the principles and theories relevant to that area of study.
- In addition depending on the nature of the laboratory course taken students will:
• Learn an practice a variety of techniques used by scientists in that discipline
• Use written communication skills to relay information about their observations and conclusions
• Learn how to use the scientific method (including generating a scientific hypothesis, and data collection and analysis)

Assessment
• Samples of student work from science courses will be examined by a panel of faculty from that discipline, and determinations made about the number (%) which meet, exceed or fall below the expected level of performance as determined by the faculty in the discipline.
• In addition to that direct assessment, departments will collect (and average) student evaluation form data reflecting student views on their own learning in these courses.
• Data will be communicated to the College and the School respectively, from the aggregate of which an overall assessment of the curricular requirement can be made. The results of that overall assessment will be discussed with the departments and judgments about planned changes, if any, will be made.

Cultural Knowledge
The cultural knowledge component of the core curriculum requires two Social Science courses and two Humanities and Fine Arts courses. All Tulane students, as part of their general education, will be exposed to ideas and methods in the liberal arts disciplines, providing them with the opportunity for intellectual discovery across the spectrum of areas taught by the faculty. Many departments offer courses which can be used to satisfy this requirement. While individual course goals are diverse, all of the courses meeting the Cultural Knowledge requirement have one or more of the following as learning outcomes:

Learning outcomes
• Develop cultural literacy, as expressed through the study of media such as cultural artifacts, literature, history, and film.
• Articulate how cultural development influences the present.
• Analyze creative performance and artistic expression (visual literacy).
• Describe and analyze human society and its institutions, historical processes and events.

Assessment methods
• Samples of student work from the required social science and humanities and fine arts courses will be examined by a panel of faculty from that discipline, and determinations made about the number (%) which meet, exceed or fall below the expected level of performance as determined by the faculty in the discipline.
• In addition to that direct assessment, departments will collect (and average) student evaluation form data reflecting student views on their own learning in these courses. Both sets of data will be communicated to the College and the School respectively, from the aggregate of which an overall assessment of the curricular requirement can be made. The results of that overall assessment will be discussed with the departments and judgments about planned changes, if any, will be made.
A sample of students will complete the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) as a measure of intercultural competence.

Public Service
The Center for Public Service administers the Public Service requirement of the undergraduate core curriculum. The guiding principle of the Center is that public service, rooted in an academic context while growing into other areas of service, contributes to the development of student civic engagement.

Learning outcomes
- Students will engage in experiential learning within the greater context of students’ academic career.
- Students will develop skills in collaboration that will enhance employability and competence in the workplace.

Assessment methods
- Student surveys
- Community partner surveys
- Examination of student personal statements by faculty to identify important civic engagement themes.

TIDES
The TIDES program aims to introduce students to the cultural and intellectual life on campus and in many cases to New Orleans and its culture through class discussions, reflection papers and journals, guest lectures, reflection papers and journals, and to enrich the first year at college.

Learning Outcomes
By design TIDES courses are varied and unique. However students should be exposed to one or more of these learning outcomes.

- Students will be exposed to the cultural, intellectual and physical resources of the university and the city. Students will learn about approaching a topic from more than one academic discipline.
- Students will interact with peers, TIDES instructors in small groups.

Assessment
- Student reflection papers, presentations, service projects where applicable, and student surveys.
- The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) results will be used to indicate the level of student engagement.