

## UCC Meeting July 23, 2019

Attendees: Ellen Crowell, Judy Geczi, Gary Barker, Jennifer Rust, Kelly Lovejoy, Ness Sandoval, Bill Rehg, Kim Druschel, Ryan McCulla, Paul Vita (remote), Chris Thomas (remote), Peggy Dotson (remote) Amber Johnson, Devita Stallings

- 1) Call to Order and comments from Core Director
- 2) Discussion of SLO #2 and how it relates to a possible disciplinary distribution within the core
  - UCC discussed how the phrase “integrate knowledge from multiple disciplines” begs two questions: what do we mean by disciplines, and how many should a) the core as a whole ask students to engage with, and b) should the integrative seminar in particular ask students to engage with.
  - UCC members present agreed that as a “graduation level” outcome, the “multiple disciplines” here will come in from a variety of avenues: First Year Seminar, core courses (Eloquentia Perfecta, Quantitative Reasoning, Creative Expression, distribution), a student’s major / minor, and also the “Complex Problems” course that is the place of conscious “integrative thinking”
  - Discussed how many disciplines would need to be integrated to solve a complex problem in this course: UCC determined that the number should be at least two, but agreed that mandating more than that would likely inhibit robust faculty involvement in the delivery of this course. And this one, like the FYS, needs a lot of dedicated faculty from many different areas of campus.
  - Question arose: should the UCC mandate that the two disciplinary areas be distinctly divergent? As in, could a History / English integration work (Humanities), or would it need to be History / Biology (Humanities / Natural Science)?
  - Group noted that what the SLO calls for is integration of multiple disciplines. But this does not give a number or type for the Integrative Seminar. A synthesis of two disciplines can be very powerful. Too many limits on this will limit both participation and creativity.
  - Group also noted that in many cases, the disciplinary “variety” that students bring to bear on a complex problem will at least in part come from their own knowledge from their major program of study—in this way, integrating the core and major as well as the two (or more) disciplines at the heart of any such course.
  - One UCC member noted that although we keep using the phrase “complex problems,” the SLO does not use the word “problem” and that was a conscious decision when drafting the SLOs. Not all complexity is a “problem.” Instead, the SLO language coalesces around question and inquiry. Integrative seminar subcommittee took this on and (MAY HAVE?) agreed to shift from “Complex Problems” to “Complex Questions”—as one member stated, “questions that don’t have a straightforward or “right” answer.” Purpose of this course is to APPLY knowledge

from multiple perspectives to the collective (SLO8) project of wrestling with complex questions.

- As UCC began to talk about what fits into any distribution (and whether that distribution needs to be broadly disciplinary, or if there is another way to distribute by SLOs) that would prepare students for such a synthetic course, attention shifted to SLOs 5 and 6. Decided those needed to be discussed before we could return to SLO 2 and the question of distribution.

3) Discussion of SLO #5 and 6 and how both relate to distribution within the core

- Amber Johnson talked the committee through the work she, Emily Lutenski and Kelly Lovejoy completed on SLOs 5 and 6
- Noted that SLO 5 is NOT a “diversity” SLO – instead, its goal is to get students to think about how identity is constituted and shaped by systems of power and privilege. This is about intersectionality, systemic injustice, equity. In this sense, SLO 5 and SLO 7 are very close in both scope and intention. [a question asked but not discussed: could a foreign language course fulfil this requirement?]
- Amber and Kelly discussed that these two SLOs should be introduced early (SLO 5 has clear and important connections to the FYS and Cura Personalis as currently drafted, for instance) but that both SLO 5 and 6 should have their own courses (not flags or designations) in the core—and further proposed that the distribution could be imagined as happening by SLO only, with departments / colleges free to populate any area as long as they refashioned courses to meet SLO learning outcomes.
- **Sideline conversation: Larger principle discussed:** the only SLOs that we should think about having students meet with a “flag” or designation are SLO 9 and maybe 8 (although 8 will be a central part of “Complex Questions” seminar). UCC agreed that SLO 9 can be met with a flag / designation and in a variety of ways determined by student / program / advisors. Agreed too that there would have to be a COMMON ARTIFACT produced—after a study abroad experience, a practicum, an internship, an immersion, etc. so that this SLO can be assessed.
- UCC reviewed their colleagues’ work on SLOs 5 and 6 and discussed whether these SLOs needed their own dedicated courses in the core. All present agreed that it made sense to think about devoting a course in the distribution to SLO 5 (and perhaps a slot in the distribution related to SLO 5 and 7 together.) There was less consensus on whether SLO 6 also warranted a lodgment, and this question needs more discussion.
- But also discussed the clear feedback from SLU community that observed that “integration of multiple disciplines” (SLO2) means that the core should ensure that students are exposed to a variety of disciplinary ways of knowing...and that layering on themes (identity construction / systemic oppression / global interdependence) means, functionally, that:
  - Not many natural sciences courses will be available for students to choose, which will limit high-credit-hour programs’ ability to double count
  - Same issue will work against feedback from SLU community that students must be pushed out of their comfort zones (i.e., Humanities must be exposed to Sciences—the vice versa won’t be as hard)
  - For purposes of transfer, AP, IB, 1818 this will be a challenge.

- UCC looked together at three other universities that have attempted something more interesting than strictly disciplinary distribution in their cores, and noted that most seem to strike a compromise between areas that multiple disciplines can participate in and those that feel more “disciplinary” (for instance, at Barnard students are required to take courses in areas like “Thinking through Global Inquiry” and “Thinking about Social Difference” but also “Thinking Quantitatively and Empirically” and “Thinking with Historical Perspective”)
  - Agreed that this was a way forward, but one that posed other problems:
    - What else “goes”? We agreed that a core without a Theology / Philosophy requirement makes no sense for SLU and won’t pass. So then, Humanities and Social Sciences become the defacto areas that deliver the Identity and Global courses.
    - Looking at the current CAS list of courses that meet the US and Global Diversity requirements, most are from Humanities and Social Sciences. If we add two courses to the distribution that are about Identity and Global Interdependence, we know that the sciences have limited capacity to theme courses in these ways, and so these two would be where many Humanities and Social Sciences courses would get taught.
    - Functionally, this would mean that in order to teach in the core, faculty members not necessarily committed to these areas of inquiry would teach here and not with the same expertise and commitment we feel these SLOs require.
    - Many voiced opposition to this, both because there are equity issues here (some disciplines forced into themes, some not) and issues regarding having questions of Diverse Identities and Global Interdependence taught well and by faculty committed to them, not merely as a means to an end (i.e., getting courses into the core)
  - Agreed that we needed to keep talking about this—not settled here.
- 4) Returned to discussion of SLO 2 in relation to 5 and 6 (and 7)
- First, agreed that these central SLOs (5, 6, and 7) need to be delivered as central part of a course, not just a flag or an attribute.
  - Agreed, too, that SLO 8 will be a central part of the integrative seminar. Students will collaborate to engage a complex question from multiple vantage points, and this multiplicity will come from 1) course topic itself; 2) students enrolled from a variety of majors; 3) other core courses completed, including FYS, QR, and core distribution.
  - Agreed that the “Complex Questions” seminar would need to rigorously synthesize at least two (but could be more) disciplinary ways of knowing in the service of engaging a complex question, but no limits on what disciplines (to ensure greater faculty participation). This means that IPS courses would work here.
  - The distribution can be a mixture of SLO-based and disciplinary-area based, as has been done at many other institutions and likely for the exact same reasons as at SLU: capacity and the need to keep the core small, balanced against the need to introduce students in complex, responsible ways to questions of identity, equity, and global interdependence.

- Agreed that in order to highlight the connection between SLO 5 and 7, and relatedly to make sure that this course was not merely the “diversity” course but instead was about how identity is constituted and mediated through cultural systems.
- Agreed that Quantitative Reasoning would NOT be part of the distribution, because the skills it ensures are foundational to the distribution. Connected instead to core competencies along with Eloquentia Perfecta

Boardwork:

SLU Core Draft distribution areas (imagined as preparing students for “Complex Questions” course)	Possible ways to think about areas, from a variety of other colleges and schools, including Notre Dame, Barnard, Linfield College, Duke
Identity in Relation (SLOs 5 and 7) Global Interdependence (SLO 6) Natural Sciences and Technology Ethics (SLO 1 and 7) Jesuit Foundations (Theo / Phil) (SLO 1)	Individuals, Systems and Society Global Inquiry Cross-Cultural Inquiry  The Natural World Science, Technology and Society  Moral and Philosophical Inquiry The Vital Past [history, art history, literature, film, cultural studies]

**What this approach above (in green) misses:**

Humanities / Social Sciences not connected to theme of Individuality in Systemic relationship or Global Interdependence

**What other universities add:**

“The Vital Past” as a way to capture the Humanities—could also be “Aesthetics, Histories and Cultures”

**What to do about the Social Sciences / Languages?** Noted that SLO 3 calls out “Qualitative Reasoning,” and although this certainly happens in many places, including literature, history, theology, philosophy classes, qualitative data analysis is another thing entirely and should we ensure (via a social sciences requirement) that students get this exposure? Also, where can LLC participate here?

Agreed to return to these SLO 2 / distribution questions at start of meeting on 7/30, and also move forward with SLO unpacking work, focusing on SLOs 1,3,7 and 9. SLOs 4 and 8 seem to need the least attention, so we may be finished with this SLO work after 7/30.

Adjourn

