



PROVIDENCE  
COLLEGE

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# **A NEW CORE CURRICULUM FOR PROVIDENCE COLLEGE**

**MAY 2, 2007**

A Proposal to the College Community by  
The Core Curriculum Review Committee

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## PREFACE

In November, 2005, Fr. Brian Shanley O.P., President of Providence College, established the Core Curriculum Review Committee (CCRC) charging it with “examining the core curriculum and making such recommendations as it deems necessary to the appropriate bodies of the College prior to the end of the 2006-2007 academic year.” We, the undersigned members of the CCRC, present this Proposal for a New Core Curriculum at Providence College in fulfillment of this charge. This proposal is the fruit of nearly eighteen months of review, research, contemplation, and deliberation about what we ought to require of our students in the core curriculum. More than one hundred faculty members, students, and administrative staff have assisted us in our efforts. Also, throughout our examination, we have been mindful of the parameters Fr. Shanley set for us regarding “the importance of the Development of Western Civilization Program and the Theology and Philosophy components of the General degree Requirement... [while being] open to proposals that improve these and other core requirements.” Consistent with these parameters, this proposal offers a new vision of the core as the foundation of our students’ liberal education at Providence College.

For the past seventeen months, we have met, on average, once per week in our review of the core curriculum. Our approach to this review of the core began with reading and discussion of the literature on liberal arts education in American higher education. In our review of this literature, we paid special attention to works addressing the challenges facing Roman Catholic colleges and universities. From these readings, we became aware of the need to make the integration of knowledge a guiding principle in a new core curriculum. Another fruit of our study was a commitment to articulate a list of Mission-related learning goals for the core curriculum. (Clearly articulating mission-related goals is considered a “best practice” for all institutions of higher education, public and private, secular and religiously affiliated). At Providence College, our Roman Catholic and Dominican traditions offer an opportunity for creating a distinctive core informed by those traditions. A draft of the Mission-related learning goals was presented to the College community at a Faculty Senate meeting on May 1, 2006. We propose here a revised list of goals for approval by the Senate and the College president.

While preparing the Mission-related goals, we worked simultaneously on gathering data relevant to our review. We examined core curricula at other institutions with particular attention to our 26 competitor schools. A summary of our findings was presented at the April 2006 Faculty Senate meeting. During Spring semester 2006, we also met with all academic departments to gather faculty perceptions of the current core and to elicit ideas for change. Similar meetings were held with a variety of student groups. By the beginning of Fall 2006, we had constituted six sub-committees involving faculty members, administrative staff, and students to develop recommendations regarding six student learning goals: Citizenship and Service, Aesthetics, Communications, Quantitative Reasoning, Global Awareness, and Life’s Meaning/Moral Reasoning. Earlier we had formed a DWC sub-committee to recommend changes to that program. In December all seven of these sub-committees submitted reports to us with recommendations for changes to the core curriculum. These reports provided us with a wealth of innovative ideas, all of which were discussed and considered, and many of which contributed to the recommendations we submit in this proposal. (All the sub-committee reports are posted on the ANGEL CCRC Faculty Information Site.) We are grateful for the service of all who volunteered for these sub-committees and thank all for their contributions.

This proposal, the fruit of many months of effort of a substantial portion of the College community, reflects the best thinking of faculty, staff, and students about how the core might be improved. In this document we provide an account of the logic behind our proposal, explain why we believe the core needs to be rooted in Mission-related student learning goals, present our specific three-component proposal, and offer suggestions for implementation. We will be happy to assist the Faculty Senate and College administration in their work to refine and adopt this new curriculum.

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

“What do we want students to learn from Providence College’s core curriculum?” This is the question that has guided the deliberations of the Core Curriculum Review Committee (CCRC) for the past eighteen months. After much reading, reflection, and research, after receiving helpful insights and recommendations from seven sub-committees involving over one hundred faculty, staff, and student members, after much discussion, deliberation (and some dissension), we offer here a core curriculum reform proposal that offers an answer to our question. Five key concepts have shaped our approach to the task of curriculum reform and have informed each of its elements: student learning goals, integration, an organic curriculum, transparency, and a mission-related core. This introduction will review briefly why we think these concepts matter for the PC core curriculum.

Early in our deliberations, we determined that a creative review of the core required a comprehensive consideration of what we think students should learn in the core curriculum rather than a simple reevaluation of courses currently satisfying core objectives. Providence College, typical of most institutions of higher education, now requires a core consisting primarily of “distribution requirements.” Students fulfill the core by checking off completion of a certain number of hours of course work in a variety of disciplinary areas. For each distribution requirement, students choose from a range of courses on a wide range of topics. The DWC course provides an exception to this pattern, but in recent years, it seems to have occupied the “humanities” position in the overall core distribution without any systematic relation to the rest of the core. Rather than focus our efforts on simply considering whether the existing distribution was appropriate or consider what additional distributional options should be required, we

thought it important to step back and consider the core as a whole and what students ought to learn in the core.

Our reading of Derek Bok's *Our Underachieving Colleges*, which reviews college curricula in terms of student learning goals, influenced our thinking about the core. Bok's approach was examined in last fall's workshop which involved over a hundred faculty, staff, and students ruminating about our curriculum in these terms. The Bok workshop discussions provided valuable insights for our deliberations. With the exception of the DWC sub-committee, all the sub-committees that we established to assist in generating creative ideas for the core were organized around student learning goals rather than existing requirements. Ideas from these sub-committees permeate the proposal presented here. Thinking about the core in terms of student learning goals rather than a distribution list of courses allowed us to consider more flexible and creative means that students could use to acquire a core liberal arts education. As a result, our proposal attempts to connect the core curriculum, disciplinary majors, and the co-curriculum into a holistic educational experience.

Our focus on student learning goals relates directly to this proposal's emphasis on the need for an integrated core curriculum – one that provides, in the words of philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre, “an integrated understanding of the order of things” (MacIntyre, p.1). Disciplinary specialization, while crucial to the success of the modern university, can pose a challenge to undergraduate students in need of the “enlargement of mind” of a liberal education. Colleges too often present to students a bewildering array of courses in different disciplines that focus on the specialized concerns of those disciplines rather than the inter-relation of those concerns and knowledge as a whole. The Providence College core curriculum needs to address this problem in two ways. First, it needs to provide courses which make explicit connections across disciplines and point to the unity of knowledge while respecting the integrity of disciplinary specialization. The Development of Western Civilization program should be enhanced, and cross-disciplinary collaboration should be institutionalized within an integrated core. Second, to help our students integrate their academic experiences, the core needs to provide mechanisms that encourage them to reflect intentionally on the connections between those experiences. In preparing this proposal, we have looked both for ways to encourage the integration of core curricular and co-curricular experiences, and to provide students with mechanisms that help them integrate what they learn.

Related to this need for integration is a need for attention to the design of and instruction in courses that satisfy core goals and objectives. Most college faculty members emerge from graduate school well prepared to teach courses in their disciplines. Such disciplinary preparation, however, may not be sufficient to prepare them for the general education goals demanded in an integrated core curriculum. Those who teach in the DWC program are acutely aware of this problem, yet it persists in every course students take to satisfy core requirements. An introductory chemistry course aimed at preparing chemistry majors for further study usually will not be the best course to introduce non-majors to scientific concepts that will be meaningful to them or useful in their pursuit of their future goals. Similarly, a theology course designed for theology majors or reflecting the goals of a seminary curriculum to prepare priests will not inspire most undergraduates to thoughtful theological reflection in their future lives—which is our hope as we prepare our graduates to be lifelong learners. Because of these special requirements of core courses (i.e., to provide the “core” or “heart” of a liberal arts education for our graduates as they go out to make their contribution to the world), we will recommend in this proposal a substantial College investment in faculty development for course design and

teaching preparation for the core. If we are to move toward a more integrated curriculum, such investments are essential.

Achieving an integrated core curriculum requires thinking of it organically. We do not conceive of this proposed core curriculum as a perfect blueprint that, once adopted, will satisfy all the goals and aspirations that we have for it. Rather we have found it more useful to conceive of the core curriculum reform as a dynamic process that must evolve over time. Much of what we propose will require changes in student, faculty, and administrative attitudes and behavior, will call for the design of new courses, and will depend on the acquisition of new resources—all of which, we acknowledge, cannot happen immediately. More importantly, we believe that all elements of the core must be assessed systematically and improved continuously based on these assessments. To satisfy the mission-related goals (recommended below), the College community will need to evaluate their achievement on a continuing basis. New administrative structures (perhaps a “Dean of the Core” as described below) and faculty committees to guide the core’s evolution are integral to all that we propose here.

We need to make the goals and purposes of the core more transparent to our students. Over the past eighteen months, one of the most common observations that we have heard, from students and faculty alike, is that students perceive core courses as something to “get out of the way.” This perception reflects how little our students understand why they are being required to take core courses, and how unreflective many are when deciding how to satisfy core requirements. Most have only the vaguest ideas about the purposes of a liberal education and what it might mean for their lives. Lacking much understanding of either the core or liberal education, our students fail to make reasoned and intentional choices in selecting courses and they generally do not consider the core curriculum as a particularly important part of their undergraduate education. We have been acutely mindful of the need to change these perceptions in preparing this proposal. Several of the elements below are aimed at increasing the transparency of the core to our students.

Finally, attentiveness to mission should be a part of the entire Providence College curriculum, but such a concern has special importance for the core. Since the core is the part of the curriculum that all our graduates share in common, it should provide the fundamental learning we expect all students to obtain at the College. The core provides the opportunity to help form the type of graduate which we consider distinctive to the PC educational experience. If we intend to educate “the whole person” at PC, then we must be sure that this vision informs the core curriculum most profoundly. Providentially, we can find in our Catholic and Dominican tradition the ideals, experiences, and intellectual practices that can assist us in attaining this goal.

In recent years, higher education researchers have found that being “mission-centered” is one of the keys to success for colleges and universities. A recent study of twenty diverse (public and private, religious and secular) institutions, *Student Success in College* by George Kuh and associates, documents how students’ academic achievement at these schools derives from a focus on mission. All these schools “have one characteristic in common: their mission is ‘alive’.” These institutions have managed to convert the “espoused” mission articulated in the abstractions of their mission statements into a concrete “enacted” mission found throughout their institutions, particularly in their curricula. Another study focused exclusively on religious institutions, *Putting Students First* by Larry A. Brascamp and associates, finds that a focus on mission helps these institutions negotiate the tension between the market pressures of an increasingly

“consumer” oriented higher education environment and their historic commitments to a holistic liberal arts education (p.11). With a curriculum tightly linked to mission, the college community more easily understands that a college education should be more about living the good life than making a living. In the next section, we propose distinctive mission-related learning goals for the Providence College core curriculum.

## **II. Mission-related Learning Goals**

Providence College’s historic mission with its roots in both Roman Catholicism and the Dominican Order, suggests a distinctive educational model that can set us apart from other institutions. At the same time, it can offer our students a unique approach to developing their intellects, moral characters, and spiritual lives. Rooted in the Roman Catholic tradition, and guided by the Dominican commitment to truth, our mission aspires to an educational outlook and approach to forming the intellect that should be attractive to persons of all faiths.

First, our Mission-related goals demand a privileged place at Providence College for the liberal arts and sciences, or what is often called “liberal education.” Modern education in the liberal arts is rooted in the medieval Catholic university’s seven liberal arts of the trivium and quadrivium, plus philosophy and theology. This core provided the students of medieval universities with the intellectual tools needed to seek the truth and to acquire an integrated understanding of the knowledge of the time. Later, in his plan for a nineteenth-century Catholic university, John Henry Cardinal Newman defined a liberal education as “education for its own sake” intended to mold the intellect of its recipient rather than any particular utilitarian end. As he wrote in *The Idea of the University*, “Liberal Education...is simply the cultivation of the intellect...to open the mind, to correct it, to refine it, to enable it to know, and to digest, master, rule, and use its knowledge, to give it power over its own faculties, application, flexibility, method, critical exactness, sagacity, resource, address, eloquent expression...” (Discourse V, p.90). The vision of liberal education passed down to us from the medieval Catholic university, through Catholic intellectuals such as Cardinal Newman, and in the experience of Catholic education in America, provides a firm basis for the future of liberal education at Providence College.

To be Catholic, then, means that liberal education should be at the very heart of our educational mission. While our entire curriculum—academic majors as well as the core curriculum—must reflect the goals of a liberal education, these goals are essential for the portion of the curriculum that all our students share: the core. Moreover, while the contemporary world places a more utilitarian demand on higher education than Newman would have liked (we are expected to prepare our students for their future careers) the focus of the core should be on the Catholic ideal of a liberal education. We must be sure that the core curriculum helps students to “open their minds” to what it means to live a good life.

Second, the Catholic tradition asserts the compatibility of faith and reason. Again, it was at the Catholic universities of the thirteenth century where the understanding of this relationship was most clearly articulated. Significantly, it was members of the new Dominican Order of Preachers, such as Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas, who formulated this understanding. Aquinas opposed some early Church fathers and much of the Church hierarchy in his own day who viewed philosophical reason in the works of the classical philosophers such as Aristotle as superfluous at best (given the knowledge of

revelation) or, at worst, a threat to the truths of faith. Aquinas showed with clarity and brilliance how both the reasoning process of classical philosophy and the knowledge of the world it illuminated could strengthen theological understanding as well as expand an understanding of the Truth of all of God's creation. This insight opened inquiry into that which was true in classical philosophy even though some of its ideas were contrary to Christian faith. Aquinas encouraged the full use of human reason to seek for truth wherever it could be found without fear that the truths of revelation would be threatened. This led Aquinas and his students to seek truth in a wide range of sources, including that of Jewish and Muslim scholars, and to follow their reasoning in raising questions about all of reality. This openness, especially to what was then the more advanced learning of Muslim universities, proved a critical advance in the development of Western civilization. Henceforth, Christian scholars became seekers after truth wherever it could be found, forming questions about all of human existence and the natural world.

This Catholic and Dominican tradition of reasoned inquiry and the compatibility of faith and reason calls for a core curriculum that inspires our students to be as eager seekers of Truth as their thirteenth-century predecessors. It must equip them with the critical thinking and analytic skills required for the task. It implies an "architectonic" (as Fr. Shanley has suggested) place for theology and philosophy in the core curriculum in order to contemplate the inter-relation of all knowledge, including the relation between faith and reason. And it also must expose them to the wide variety of outlooks, ideas, and worldviews wherein they might find and contemplate the truth. Most importantly, they need to encounter those ways of thinking that are furthest from the conventional and comfortable outlooks of their own upbringing. Only through such encounters, as the Thomistic tradition suggests, can they discover evidence of God's truth and presence in all human cultures and develop a more reasoned and thorough understanding of their own tradition. This aspect of our Catholic and Dominican tradition provides a sound basis for embedding in our core curriculum encounters with the diverse cultures of our increasingly globalized world.

Third, the Dominican intellectual tradition offers a particular intellectual discipline of the *disputatio* or "disputed question" that could become a hallmark of the PC core curriculum pedagogy. This method of inquiry dates to the medieval university where a "Master" would pose a disputed question for formal argument to the university community. Over several days other Masters, with the assistance of their students, would offer various responses to the question, after which the Master who initially proposed the question would synthesize these opposing views, pointing out the truth and error in each. In much of his scholarly work, Aquinas adapts this method of argument as he poses a question, presents fully and without bias various answers, and then presents his own position, while pointing out what is true in the arguments he rejects. Since the thirteenth century, Dominicans have continued this discipline as a part of their intellectual formation. The tradition of the "disputed question" offers a pedagogical method that ought to characterize the courses of our core curriculum.

Finally, the Dominican motto "to contemplate and share the fruits of contemplation" should inspire us to create a core curriculum that engages our students with the world. St. Dominic created an Order of Preachers that was engaged with the world, not cloistered in the monastery. From the Order's earliest days, itinerant friars traveled the roads of Europe, lived in the newly thriving cities and, of course, in the universities. Their aim was to engage with the world. Wherever possible, Dominican friars would live in community, but at the same time interact with the people around them. The friars would be contemplative – live a life of prayer and study – but offer what they learned through

their contemplation to the world. Our Dominican colleagues continue to live this life today.

If our students are to follow the path of St. Dominic, they must take what they learn in the campus “cloister” on the road. This implies a core curriculum that prompts and inspires our students to share what they learn with the world. This may take the form of public presentations of material learned in a class or publication of course writings. In some courses, service-learning may link the work of the course to community service projects. Being in the world must include increased understanding of public affairs and participation in civic life. In a globalized world this also means a need to interact with people of other cultures, within our own country and in other parts of the world, perhaps through a study-abroad experience or proficiency in a foreign language. Our students need to connect their learning experience, while a part of our College community, to the communities in which they live. Most importantly, the core curriculum must prepare students for a lifetime habit of sharing their knowledge, gifts, and talents with others.

These reflections have informed the specific student learning goals articulated below. The CCRC recommends that the Faculty Senate and the College administration formally endorse the following list of goals for our core curriculum.

## ***Core Curriculum Mission-related Goals***

Providence College is a Catholic and Dominican institution of higher education. This identity and the intellectual tradition that derives from it shape and inform the Core Curriculum and suggest the following goals:

- 1. In the tradition of St. Thomas Aquinas, our students should understand the essential compatibility of faith and reason, and the integrated and cohesive nature of reality and truth. Our students should pursue the highest ideals of Dominican education: the contemplation of truth, and the sharing of the fruits of contemplation with others.*
- 2. In the Dominican tradition, study is undertaken not only for itself but for the benefit of others and thus students should demonstrate a commitment to civic engagement and service to others informed by Catholic Social Teaching.*
- 3. Our students should demonstrate an understanding of how philosophical and theological questions inform and guide the pursuit of the truth, therefore philosophy and theology should have an essential place in the Core.*
- 4. Students should demonstrate a capacity for moral and ethical reasoning, including an understanding of the virtue-based ethics tradition, and how these ethical traditions can be applied to specific disciplines or fields of endeavor.*
- 5. In the Dominican tradition, students and faculty should engage in the pedagogy of disputed questions and reasoned argumentation in search for understanding.*
- 6. Since the pursuit of knowledge, understanding, and wisdom does not take place in isolation but in the context of community and the larger world, our students should:*
  - a. demonstrate an integrated understanding of the important events, ideas, and cultural traditions that have shaped the world;*
  - b. demonstrate awareness and understanding of other cultures, societies, and creeds;*
  - c. demonstrate an understanding of the natural world and our place within it.*
- 7. In the spirit of the Dominicans as the Order of Preachers, students should develop fundamental skills in critical, logical, and quantitative reasoning, and should demonstrate the ability to speak and write in a clear, coherent, and well-informed manner.*
- 8. Since the Catholic tradition finds in creation an image of its Creator, and recognizing the importance of creativity and artistic expression in the Dominican tradition, students should develop the aesthetic dimensions of their minds and spirits.*
- 9. Finally, students should demonstrate an understanding of the Core Curriculum as the heart and soul of a Providence College education. The Core should help illuminate the key questions of human existence relating to life's purpose and meaning.*

### **III. The Core Curriculum**

We propose an integrated core curriculum consisting of three components: a Foundational Component, a Learning Proficiencies Component, and an Integrative Component. The Foundation courses aim at introducing students to the breadth of liberal knowledge with a particular emphasis on those areas of knowledge distinctive to our mission. The Learning Proficiencies require students to improve their skills and habits of mind in areas critical to liberal learning while offering flexible options for fulfilling these requirements. Finally, the Integrative Component offers students the tools they need to reflect critically on their own liberal education goals, including how to inter-connect courses taken in the core, their majors, and electives as well as their co-curricular experiences, and to encourage faculty to connect differing areas of knowledge in their design of courses. While each of these components is conceptually distinct, they comprise together an integrated vision of the core curriculum.

#### **A. Foundational Component**

This component consists of forty-four credit hours in the areas of Development of Western Civilization, Theology, Philosophy, Natural Science, Social Science, and the Fine Arts. Courses taken in these areas will introduce students to the breadth of liberal knowledge as well as the distinctive methodological approaches of the humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences. We have formulated specific course objectives for each of these requirements which embody the particular general education goals these courses must meet.

In addition to satisfying these specific requirement objectives, every course in this foundational component of the core must satisfy two cross-cutting objectives. *First, each must demonstrate that it addresses the particular learning needs of students taking the course to satisfy a core requirement.* This objective means that courses developed in a particular discipline to serve academic majors may not be suitable for the core curriculum. Core courses must be designed with the purposes of the core curriculum as a whole and its mission-related goals in mind. *Second, each foundational core course must require multiple writing assignments totaling at least eight pages of formal out-of-class writing.* The ability to write clear and effective prose is an extremely complex cognitive skill that cannot be learned in a single course. To develop strong writing skills, students need constant practice in a variety of courses throughout their college careers.

#### **The Development of Western Civilization Requirement**

**A four semester, 20-credit (five per semester), team-taught course taken in the freshman and sophomore years.**

##### **Course Description**

As the heart of the College's liberal arts curriculum, the Development of Western Civilization (DWC) course seeks to help students develop the intellectual habits and skills central to the liberal arts: deep reading, thoughtful reflection, and the articulation (in both speech and in writing) of reasoned arguments. In DWC, these habits are practiced and developed through an historical, interdisciplinary study of the disputed questions central to the great texts, significant events, institutions, and artistic creations of

the West. The course urges students to think deeply about the intellectual, spiritual, ethical, and aesthetic values articulated in many different ways in these rich texts.

## **Rationale**

Since 1971, the study of the Development of Western Civilization has been the “core” of Providence College’s core curriculum and we affirm the continued prominence of the DWC course within the core. To meet the needs of future generations of Providence College students and to satisfy the mission-related goals for the core, however, the DWC course needs to be renewed as recommended in the report of the DWC sub-committee (see Appendix A). As the sub-committee recommends, the course should be structured around primary texts which are best understood when they are placed in their full historical and cultural context. This means deep reading and discussion of primary works in a seminar setting as the heart of the course, supplemented with classes that set the discussed works in context and trace the continuities and discontinuities within the Western tradition. Engaging the sources, ideas, accomplishments and failures of Western culture through an interdisciplinary methodology enriches the lives of our students and is an essential step in equipping them to live in a global society. Further, by applying the pedagogy of the medieval *disputatio*, students will a) develop the intellectual habits and skills central to the liberal arts, and b) examine the essential texts of the Western tradition both with respect to their historical and cultural contexts and their abiding value in contemplating the key questions of human existence. Moreover, we recognize the program’s role in demonstrating the College’s commitment, as articulated in the mission-related goals, to the compatibility of faith and reason, the value of an integrated understanding of human experience, the vital importance of ethical and moral reasoning, the appreciation of the aesthetic dimension in civilization, and the regard for other cultures which have influenced the development of the West.

## **Requirement Objectives**

The DWC course will:

1. Examine in an integrated way the major streams of development in Western Civilization with a focus on prevailing values and disputed questions as they evolve from epoch to epoch.
2. Require students to read deeply and critically using primary works from the Western tradition and its sources. Works from beyond the West will also be included when they illuminate points of cultural contact and exchange between Western and non-Western civilizations. Throughout the course, special attention will be devoted to thinkers and works grounded in the Roman Catholic tradition. The final semester will more intentionally integrate a comparative and global perspective.
3. Develop effective communication skills as students participate actively in seminar discussions and write frequently in response to course readings. Multiple out-of-class writing assignments totaling at least fifteen pages will be required each semester.
4. Promote analytical and synthetic reasoning as students practice making arguments in written assignments and in seminar discussions: they will learn to select and defend a position on a debatable issue, support their position with appropriate evidence, and address counterarguments.

5. Analyze religion's role in the development of Western civilization, considering religious questions with a serious regard that acknowledges not only the Catholic and Dominican character of Providence College, but also the importance of other religious traditions integral to the experience of the West.
6. Approach the course's central questions from an interdisciplinary perspective through studying, discussing, and writing about the core texts in the context of relevant historical, philosophical, theological, literary and other issues.
7. Nurture the ability to make and defend aesthetic judgments through discussing and writing about complex works of literature, music, and the visual arts.
8. Promote students' sense of themselves as citizens, as members of a human community, not only by studying basic forms of government and political organization in the West, but also by engaging in class in the kind of informed debate and free exchange of ideas that should characterize a healthy democracy.
9. Introduce the use the library and other research resources fundamental to the practice of scholarship through completion of at least one research-oriented writing or presentation project in the second year of DWC.

### **Recommendations**

The renewal of DWC requires a major restructuring of how the DWC course is taught, staffed, and administered. We emphatically endorse the recommendations on syllabus and pedagogy, program administration, staffing, and faculty development presented in the DWC sub-committee report (see Appendix A). Rather than repeat in detail those recommendations, summarized below are key highlights.

- An ideal class size of forty-five students taught by a three-person team allowing for weekly seminar meetings of fifteen students each.
- A normal course structure of three hours of large group meetings to establish the cultural context for a primary text discussed in a weekly 2-hour seminar.
- Faculty team discretion for designing the specific content and pedagogy of individual course sections within a general syllabus framework, including some common readings and disputed questions, designated by a DWC Faculty Council.
- Appointment of a DWC director from among the tenured members of the DWC faculty in the manner departmental chairs are chosen.
- The Director with the assistance of an Associate Director will be responsible for general program administration, faculty recruitment, faculty development, evaluation of faculty, and the assessment of student learning.
- A six person Faculty Council drawn from DWC faculty will advise the Director.
- A new emphasis on expanding the pool of DWC faculty from the ranks of the ordinary faculty with a special emphasis on encouraging the participation of more senior faculty and encouraging faculty members across all disciplines to participate.
- More flexibility in the teaching load commitment of individual DWC professors as the expansion of the staffing pool permits.
- More emphasis on faculty development including orientation for new faculty in the program, annual end-of-the-year review sessions, workshops on incorporating disputed questions, active learning strategies, and general curriculum

development, compensated annual summer faculty seminars on primary works used in the course, and aggressive fund-raising to support these activities.

## **The Theology Requirement**

**Two 3-credit courses: one from core-designated 200-level courses and one from core-designated 300-level courses.**

### **Rationale**

Providence College's Mission is to educate the whole student and to pursue Truth in a way that underscores the unity of Truth and the compatibility of faith and reason. Hence, the study of theology is at the heart of our curriculum, and is an integral portion of the core curriculum. Our students will engage in a practice of reasoned inquiry about God and faith and the great questions of human life (e.g., What is the origin of my existence? Why is there something rather than nothing? What might one hope for, either for oneself or for humanity?) in a manner comparable with the reasoned inquiry with which they investigate other areas of the liberal arts.

The development of theological thinking is a component of the Development of Western Civilization program; however, the courses in theology increase and deepen the exposure of our students to the fruit of centuries of Christian thinking about God, their understanding of the relationship between God and humankind in such a worldview, and an appreciation of the Catholic and Dominican views of the religious and spiritual dimension of human life. In theology courses, students develop a critical understanding of the dialogic relationship between theological study and the other areas of intellectual endeavor in the liberal arts. The theology component of the core curriculum is indispensable in our mission to prepare our students to continue to reflect on their place in the world and to continue to grow spiritually in whatever path God's providence takes them after graduation.

### **Requirement Objectives**

*200-level core courses will:*

1. Explore the doctrine of divine revelation and foundational theological discourse about God.
2. Provide students with the opportunity to read deeply and critically key Biblical texts of the Judaeo-Christian tradition.
3. Enable students to develop an understanding of the basic elements of the Christian tradition.
4. Present for the students a framework of Christian anthropology within which they will examine theological teachings on human nature and grace.
5. Include a description of the basic trajectory of Christian life as expressed in terms of either (a) ecclesiology (theology of the Church), (b) the operation and work of the sacraments, or (c) the development of the moral and spiritual life.

6. Examine the relationship between faith and reason.
7. Introduce to students the core methodologies of Christian theology and give them the opportunity to develop analytical thinking therein.
8. Address the application of theological themes and perspectives to the realities of human life in both its social and personal aspects.

***300-level core courses will:***

1. Build on theological themes or problems developed in 200 level courses while making connections to other fields of study and/or deepening understanding of a theological concept or issue.
2. Address the application of theological themes and perspectives to the realities of human life in either its personal aspects or its social aspects (including global issues—current or historic—illuminating the interrelatedness of theology and society).
3. Analyze theological issues in the Roman Catholic tradition in comparison and contrast to how they are addressed in some other religious traditions.
4. Give students the opportunity to coordinate and integrate several theological perspectives by writing one 10-20 page research paper or substantial essay with references to primary sources.

**Recommendations**

- We recommend that courses be developed which link the application of theological principles with specific majors, as in the connections already apparent in the link between “Catholic Social Thought” and Economics and Public Service majors, “Church and the Major World Religions” and the Global Studies majors, or “American Religious Experience” and American Studies majors. Additional courses could be developed to assist reflection on the moral implications of genetic engineering, environmental crises, moral questions arising from political and legal issues currently being debated, etc.
- Theology faculty members are encouraged to collaborate with colleagues in other departments in forming “learning communities” (see discussion below) connecting core theology courses with other courses in the curriculum.
- Increase Theology elective offerings to include courses focusing on world religions (i.e. Islam, Judaism, Asian Religions) and comparative studies (i.e. Christianity Among the World Religions; Religions of the Book: Islam, Judaism, Christianity; Hispanic-American Religions Experience and Theology).

## The Philosophy Requirement

**Two 3-credit courses in core-designated philosophy courses, at least one of which must be an ethics course.**

### Rationale

The tradition of the Dominican order is one of teaching and scholarship, of seeking answers to the great questions of human speculation and of helping others to do the same, and it is in support of this tradition that Providence College requires of its students the study of philosophy. Philosophy is “the love of wisdom,” and as such, philosophy serves to enrich the lives of our students not only by leading them onto the path to finding these answers—since by nature we all desire to know them—but also by cultivating in our students the habits of moral reasoning and virtuous practice, qualities indispensable for any member of society to contribute to the common good. Beyond this, the study of philosophy uniquely fosters our students’ faculties of reasoning, making them better able to think critically, to understand themselves in light of the Judeo-Christian heritage, to discern virtue, and, ultimately, to pursue the goal of all education: Truth.

### Requirement Objectives

The course will:

1. Provide opportunities for the students to demonstrate critical evaluation of ideas and logical thinking.
2. Include a review of the philosophical tradition by tracing the evolution of philosophical problems, including how analyzing these problems helps understanding issues (current or historic) confronting the contemporary world.
3. Highlight concepts of the human person and human nature consistent with the mission of the College and the Judeo-Christian tradition.

*Ethics courses will meet the following additional objectives:*

4. Explore the meaning and purpose of the ethical life.
5. Examine the complexity of the decision-making process and provide guidance for making good moral decisions.
6. Provide opportunities for students to nurture a habit of reflective moral judgments through the study of moral problems.
7. Include a study of the philosophical tradition of Natural Law as expressed in the teachings of Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas.

### Recommendations

- We recommend that more “applied ethics” courses be developed (e.g., Legal Ethics, Environmental Ethics, Corporate Social Responsibility, Health Care Ethics, International Ethics, Media Ethics, Politics and Ethics, etc.) to enable

students to pursue philosophical and ethical issues appropriate to their major or minor fields of concentration.

- We recommend that students consider taking two ethics courses to satisfy this requirement: a first course in General Ethics and a second in applied ethics chosen from among existing applied ethics courses and new ones that the philosophy department develops as recommended above. If an applied ethics course is to be more than a surface-level bouncing of unsupported opinions off of each other, the students need to have first experienced a thorough grounding in ethical theory.
- Philosophy faculty members are encouraged to collaborate with colleagues in other departments in forming “learning communities” (see discussion below) connecting core philosophy courses with other courses in the curriculum. Such learning communities may be especially effective in conjunction with applied ethics courses.

## **The Natural Science Requirement**

**Two 3 (or more)-credit courses, at least one designated as including a “hands-on” component.**

### **Rationale**

Providence College students pursue the Truth through faith and reason, in keeping with the Dominican tradition as seen especially in the work of St. Albert the Great and St. Thomas Aquinas. Science provides an empirical analysis of truth in the natural order, and approaches the natural world from the unique perspective of the scientific method. Students should be able to dissect an argument and determine if it truly meets the criteria of science, or if it simply uses scientific-sounding words and phrases to hide a flawed analysis. They should be able to appreciate the compatibility of reason and faith in the pursuit of truth.

In the Dominican tradition, study is undertaken not only for itself but for the benefit of others. In engaging with the pressing issues of our time (such as embryonic stem cells, global warming, and the wise use of energy resources), and committed to service and the common good, our graduates must be prepared to look beyond labels and catch phrases to the basic scientific facts and data which will provide a foundation for realistic solutions. Students need to be able to integrate religious, philosophical, political, and scientific viewpoints into a coherent whole in order to make effective decisions for the betterment of society. This background will enable our students and our graduates to make informed decisions about important scientific issues that affect our society.

### **Requirement Objectives**

The course will:

1. Characterize the scientific method by demonstrating
  - the dependence of science on quantitative and testable empiricism
  - the manner in which scientific theories and models are developed
  - the dynamic nature of scientific theories.

2. Present a body of scientific information drawn from the natural sciences by
  - demonstrating the interrelatedness of different areas of science
  - improve students' scientific literacy at a non-technical level.
3. Illustrate a scientific perspective, describing how scientists study the natural world, and how this differs from other forms of study.
4. Address issues which have a significant impact on the world to give students a foundation from which to understand better the interrelatedness of science and society.
5. Courses designated as "hands-on" will give students significant opportunities to illustrate the role of testable empiricism in the development of scientific theory via either classroom, laboratory or project activities.

### **Recommendations**

- Students should take their natural science core courses during either the sophomore or junior year. Although this is the current advising practice, it is virtually impossible to get a seat in a science core class until the student's senior year. With this final core requirement standing between the student and graduation, it is not surprising that there is a great deal of anxiety associated with the core requirement. Taking the course earlier will alleviate this anxiety, and will allow students more time to see the interconnectedness of their core classes.
- As the science departments have operated with a staffing deficit for over ten years (typically 150 seats per year short of meeting demand), it is recommended that additional hires of tenure-track faculty be made to address this shortage. If we truly value our core curriculum, we cannot continue to tolerate these staffing shortages and we cannot depend on temporary faculty to teach these classes. Reliance on adjuncts and special lecturers for our core courses while tenure-track professors concentrate on classes for their majors sends the message to students and the community that the core curriculum is not important to us.
- Science faculty need administrative support for faculty development in creating more engaging courses for non-science majors, developing "hands-on" components, and integrating science courses more fully with other parts of the curriculum.
- Science faculty members are encouraged to collaborate with colleagues in other departments in forming "learning communities" (see discussion below) connecting core science courses with other courses in the curriculum.

## **The Social Science Requirement**

**One 3-credit course chosen from core-designated courses in a social science discipline.**

### **Rationale**

The Providence College Mission Statement reminds us of the "unity of the human family that proceeds from its one Creator" and "encourages the deepest respect for the essential dignity, freedom, and equality of every person". Our mission also requires us to help students develop a more reasoned and thorough understanding of their own society and culture as well as those of others. To honor these imperatives and accomplish these goals, the curriculum must promote critical understanding of individual and collective

human behavior and institutions, precisely the subject matter of the social sciences. Social science entails the application of quantitative and qualitative methods to the study of human social institutions and behavior. Through the application and study of such methods, and through analytic reflection on the concepts and theories employed by the social science disciplines, students should deepen their commitment to the Truth, and develop the knowledge and the critical abilities needed to become informed, engaged citizens of American society and the world. It is for these reasons that the core curriculum includes a social science requirement.

### **Requirement Objectives**

The course will:

1. Demonstrate the value of systematic, rigorous qualitative and/or quantitative methods for understanding individual and collective human behavior and institutions.
2. Analyze key concepts and theories concerning individual human behavior and/or collective action and organization.
3. Examine how empirical evidence is used to construct arguments about human behavior and/or social, political and economic phenomena.
4. Explore the role of norms and values in shaping human behavior and socio-political phenomena.
5. Analyze social science issues within larger historical and global contexts and encourage students to reflect on the human and social impact of developments in other areas of inquiry, such as the arts, science, religion, etc.

### **Recommendations**

- We recommend that faculty develop courses that include substantial attention to the Learning Proficiency objectives of the core, including Civic Engagement, Cross-Cultural Understanding, Quantitative Reasoning, and Intensive Writing.
- We recommend that courses be developed or expanded that link social scientific approaches to other areas of inquiry and human endeavor such as the arts, science, business, philosophy, etc.
- Faculty members in the Social Science disciplines are encouraged to collaborate with colleagues in other departments in forming “learning communities” connecting core social science courses with core courses in other disciplines.

## **The Fine Arts Requirement**

**One 3-credit course chosen from core-designated courses in the fine arts.**

### **Rationale**

The Fine Arts requirement reflects the importance of creative and artistic expression within the Dominican tradition and the Catholic faith. The Mission of Providence College requires that we educate students as moral, spiritual and intellectual beings. To accomplish this goal, we must provide students with opportunities to develop the

aesthetic dimension of their minds and spirits. The Fine Arts core seeks to foster students' understanding and appreciation of the arts, and of the aesthetic in the human and natural world. It encourages our students to reflect on aesthetics as a way of integrating the multifaceted dimensions of human experience. Through such reflection, students can develop a richer understanding of the meaning of life and of the moral and spiritual values that sustain it. We also hope to encourage students to develop life-long practices of arts appreciation, and of considering the role of the aesthetic in broader human and social questions.

The Fine Arts requirement can be fulfilled through courses that emphasize the historical development of different forms of art, as well as those that emphasize hands-on student involvement in the creation of works of art, music, theatre, dance, or film. Regardless of emphasis, Fine Arts core courses should encourage the development of students' critical appreciation of the arts, including an understanding of how historical changes have shaped the creative process and notions of the aesthetic. Where possible and relevant, core courses in the Fine Arts should seek to enrich students' aesthetic experience by exposing them to the resources of the Rhode Island cultural community.

### **Requirement Objectives**

The course will:

1. Teach students ways of analyzing, interpreting, and, where relevant, creating works of art.
2. Examine historical developments in aesthetics and artistic creation, including how the arts and notions of the aesthetic are shaped by social, political, cultural and technological change.
3. Analyze the creative processes through which works of art are produced.
4. Encourage students to examine the place of the arts and aesthetic in their own lives and communities, for instance, through reflection on their own cultural environment.

### **Recommendations**

- Fine Arts departments are encouraged to develop internships connected with co-curricular experiences as a way to satisfy the objectives of the fine arts requirement.
- We recommend that more fine arts faculty participate in teaching in the DWC program to assist in incorporating additional attention to Western and non-Western aesthetics.
- In keeping with the integrative aspirations of the core curriculum, we recommend that greater attention be paid to the aesthetic environment of the Providence College community. To this end, exhibition spaces should be established throughout the campus to immerse students in a cultural, aesthetic environment. Questions regarding the aesthetic impact of campus construction, renovation, and landscaping should be thoroughly considered, perhaps through the establishment of a design review committee comprised in part of faculty, staff and students with expertise and interest in the arts.

- The College should enhance existing spaces dedicated to the arts, such as the two art galleries on East Campus, by providing sufficient resources to support their operation.
- To prepare our students for lifelong participation in and appreciation of the arts, and to enhance their understanding of the role the arts play in our communities, we recommend that the College support participation in arts events off campus, such as travel to major art museums, musical performances, theatrical productions and film series in the Northeast region.
- We recommend that the College acquire, through purchase or donation, institutional memberships and/or subscriptions to area museums and cultural organizations featuring dance, music, theater performances and film festivals.
- We recommend the College build upon existing partnerships and develop new ones with major community arts organizations to strengthen internship possibilities for Providence College students.
- The College should develop an “artist in residence program” to take advantage of the wealth of individual artistic talent in greater Providence.
- Inventory campus art holdings, assess their value, develop a plan to manage and conserve them, and create data bases of the College’s holdings.
- Establish a “percent for art” requirement within each campus construction or renovation project.
- Create a “Friends Society” with annual membership dues directed to support the aesthetic experience, with friends (donors) becoming “season ticket holders” to campus lectures, performances, etc.
- Faculty members in the Fine Arts are encouraged to collaborate with colleagues in other departments in forming “learning communities” connecting core arts courses with core courses in other disciplines.

## **B. Learning Proficiencies Component**

These requirements demand that students enhance their proficiency in the following six areas of knowledge while at Providence College:

1. Quantitative Reasoning (in addition to minimal Math proficiency)
2. Intensive Writing
3. Oral Communication
4. Civic Understanding
5. Cross-cultural Understanding
6. Foreign Language Engagement

Fulfilling these requirements involves satisfying the learning objectives of each requirement either in a course or in a co-curricular activity. They will not necessarily require that students take additional course hours to fulfill them. Any course, whether a core foundational course, a course in the student’s major, or a free elective, can satisfy the requirement if it meets the learning objectives of the requirement. This means students normally will satisfy these requirements while simultaneously fulfilling other academic requirements (see illustrations below.) Also, students may satisfy these requirements through a faculty supervised co-curricular experience. (The “Dean of the Core” will develop procedures both for identifying courses which satisfy requirement objectives and for the certification that a student’s co-curricular experience satisfies requirement objectives.)

For some students these Learning Proficiency requirements will actually reduce the size of the core curriculum from its current size. Students who in the past needed to take a writing course in the English Department would be able to take a course in their major or in the core that fulfills the “Intensive Writing” requirement. Likewise, students might take a “Quantitative Reasoning” course that also fulfills a major or core requirement.

Our intention in instituting these Learning Proficiencies is to incorporate additional educational objectives into the core without necessarily increasing the size of the core curriculum. We are also hoping to bridge the gap between curricular and co-curricular activities. We would certainly encourage students to fulfill at least some of these requirements outside the classroom.

Here are some examples of how a student might satisfy learning proficiencies simultaneously with other requirements:

--A course in Chinese Politics might satisfy both a Social Science requirement and the Cross-cultural Understanding requirement. It also might satisfy the Intensive Writing requirement.

--The Arts in American Civic Life could satisfy the Fine Arts requirement and Civic Understanding.

--African-American Literature could satisfy Cross-cultural Understanding and Intensive Writing.

--Two semesters of community service translating for Spanish-speaking parents in schools might satisfy the Foreign Language Engagement requirement and Cross-cultural Understanding.

## **Quantitative Reasoning Proficiency**

**One core-designated quantitative reasoning course chosen from the two options described below. (Students who fail to meet a minimum standard on the Quantitative Reasoning Assessment Exam (QRAE) also will be required to take a remedial course prior to attempting this requirement.)**

### **Rationale**

Quantitative reasoning skills are essential in the modern world. Every professional career demands some ability to understand presentations of quantitative data, analyze them and draw reasonable conclusions, and manipulate such data in making arguments. Good citizens need such skills to contribute to public debates over taxes, public budgets, and public policy choices whether at a school board meeting or in the halls of the US Congress. A comprehensive liberal arts education must improve students’ appreciation of the value of quantitative approaches to understanding and modes of thought. Unlike traditional instruction in mathematics, focused on learning abstract mathematical rules, quantitative reasoning emphasizes the practical application of mathematical principles (Bok, p. 129).

This requirement offers students the flexibility of acquiring QR proficiency in a variety of ways, including meeting the requirement in a course most suitable to their academic major. The first option, below, which emphasizes statistics and probability, may be of most interest to pre-professional, social science, and humanities majors. The second option requires increasing skills in the calculus required in the natural sciences. Each student, however, will have the option of choosing the QR course most suitable to his or

her particular course of study. An English major, for example, may wish to hone calculus skills acquired in high school, or choose to develop statistical skills related to analyzing book sales for a future career in publishing. Within each option, however, all students will acquire practical skills for understanding, manipulating, and presenting arguments employing quantitative reasoning.

### **Requirement Objectives**

#### *Course Option #1*

The course will:

1. Introduce the properties and applications of functions, linear systems, and probability in business and social sciences such as linear equations and inequalities, functions, graphs, systems of simultaneous linear equations, matrices, probability, and mathematics of finance.
2. Teach students how to calculate basic elements of statistics such as frequency distributions, measures of central tendency, measures of dispersion, the normal distribution, confidence intervals, and significance.
3. Examine how quantitative reasoning and evidence are used in constructing substantive arguments.
4. Evaluate quantitative claims according to conceptual, statistical and mathematical criteria.
5. Demonstrate ways of responsibly communicating quantitative information in graphics and in writing.
6. Assign projects that require students to demonstrate these skills.

#### *Course Option #2:*

The course will:

1. Provide an introduction to the basic theory of differential and integral calculus.
2. Introduce students to one-variable calculus and cover topics in limits and differentiation.
3. Demonstrate how these techniques can be used in the analysis of scientific data.
4. Evaluate quantitative claims according to conceptual, statistical and mathematical criteria.
5. Demonstrate ways of responsibly communicating quantitative information in graphics and in writing.
6. Assign projects that require students to demonstrate these skills.

## **Recommendations**

- The “Dean of the Core” should establish a specialized inter-disciplinary QR sub-committee of the Faculty/Student Core Committee with the following responsibilities: (1) Developing a QRAE to replace the current Mathematics placement exam; (2) Assist in identifying and developing suitable QR courses within the mathematics department and other appropriate departments; (3) Advise on the approval of courses satisfying the QR objectives; and (4) Identify and/or develop appropriate remedial courses for students identified by the QRAE as deficient in QR skills.
- Faculty collaboration between mathematics faculty and faculty in other departments should be encouraged to develop QR courses appropriate to different academic majors.
- Students should be encouraged to include in their e-portfolios documentation of their QR skills.
- The College should consider establishing a professionally staffed QR Center (located perhaps in the School of Business ) to support QR and other courses as well as offer individual assistance to students. A number of elite liberal arts colleges, such as Amherst, Wellesley and Trinity, currently operate such centers.

## **Intensive Writing Proficiency**

### **One core-designated intensive writing course.**

#### **Rationale**

In keeping with the mission-related goal that all students “should demonstrate the ability to speak and write in a clear, coherent, and well-informed manner,” all students must take at least one core-designated “Intensive Writing” course.

#### **Requirement Objectives**

The course will:

1. Require a variety of writing assignments throughout the semester, totaling at least 20 pages of out-of-class formal writing. At least one writing assignment should require research and proper documentation.
2. Provide students with ample practice in writing outlines, multiple revised drafts, peer editing, and final revision.
3. Develop the ability of students to write insightful and well-organized essays, with a unifying thesis, supporting evidence, and language that is precise, concise, and appropriate for the intended audience and rhetorical situation.
4. Teach students the proper use and correct citation of sources, appropriate for the academic discipline.
5. Enhance the ability of students to use basic stylistic techniques, such as control of tone, variety of sentence structure, and effective use of transitions. As needed, the course should also review basic grammar, punctuation, and formatting of text.

## **Recommendations**

- Providence College should establish a Communication Center staffed by writing professionals to provide support for writing intensive courses, including faculty development for skills in creating writing assignments, evaluating and grading student work.
- All students should be encouraged to use the Communication Center, but students deficient in basic grammar should be especially encouraged to do so.

### **One core-designated oral communication course.**

#### **Rationale**

In keeping with the mission-related goal that all students “should demonstrate the ability to speak and write in a clear, coherent, and well-informed manner,” all students must take at least one core-designated “Oral Communication” course.

#### **Requirement Objectives**

The course will:

1. Require students to present at least one formal oral report, along with a variety of other oral presentations, such as student-led class discussions.
2. Instruct students in delivering oral presentations that are designed to be lively and interesting, enhanced by means of effective gestures, body language, facial expressions, and carefully controlled vocal pitch and intensity.
3. Instruct students in the virtues of effective communication, including a clearly focused topic, a unified thesis, supporting evidence, and language that is precise, concise, and appropriate for the rhetorical situation.

#### **Recommendation**

- Providence College should establish a Communication Center staffed with professionals in oral communication skills to provide support for these courses, including faculty development for skills in creating oral communication assignments, evaluating and grading student work.

## **Civic Understanding Proficiency**

**Students will demonstrate proficiency in civic understanding through a designated course or co-curricular experience.**

#### **Rationale**

Providence College students are the future of an increasingly complex society and world. In that world, every citizen must be educated on public issues, be able to think critically through public problems, and help to devise solutions mindful of the common good. As a goal of our mission, the Dominican tradition emphasizes education as a means to instill such values in students. Our students must understand and engage with the civic world in

order to grow into responsible citizens of a twenty-first century global community, as stated in our Mission-related goals.

### **Requirement Objectives**

A course or co-curricular experience that meets the Civic Understanding Proficiency requirement will:

1. Examine, in depth, one or more public policy issues.
2. Explore the nature of the political forces, institutions, and ideas that influence the policy outcomes studied.
3. Encourage students to consider their own role in the larger political community and their responsibilities within that community. This analysis should include an examination of citizen obligations to promote key elements of the common good such as social justice, solidarity, human rights and dignity, participation, peace, subsidiarity, economic justice, and a “preferential option for the poor.”
4. Analyze the collective decision-making challenges associated with seeking the common good.

### **Recommendations**

- In the spirit of lifelong education, this requirement seeks to stretch the normative notions of education. Students involved with campus government and internships in political environments, for example, could use their experiences to become more civically aware and engaged. While meeting proficiency in this area requires faculty-supervision and certification from the “Dean of the Core”, satisfaction of this requirement should only be limited by the creativity of students.

## **Cross-cultural Understanding Proficiency**

**Students will demonstrate proficiency in cross-cultural understanding through a designated course or co-curricular experience.**

### **Rationale**

The pursuit of truth should never be solitary or in isolation from the human community. Education is not merely an acquisitive process, but a formation of mind and heart directed toward the sharing of contemplation’s fruits with others. Such sharing, however, is reciprocal by its very nature. Communicating the truth to others presupposes an openness to different cultural perspectives and religious outlooks—not as a detached judge, but as one committed to genuine dialogue and the mutual growth that proceeds from a commitment to truth wherever it can be found. This commitment recognizes a real compatibility between the way the mind works and the very structure of reality as an ordered whole in which humans serve as stewards of creation in contributing to the common good for all people. A commitment to cross-cultural understanding is especially important at an institution like PC which at present is fairly homogeneous in terms of student and faculty racial and ethnic background.

Cross-cultural understanding can take two forms. First, it can mean understanding diversity within American culture, such as that based on race, ethnicity, socio-economic class, gender, religion, disability. Second, cross-cultural understanding can involve encounters with the diverse cultures around the globe. Both forms of cross-cultural understanding flow directly from the Catholic, Dominican, and liberal arts mission, as well as the necessity of dealing with a changing, interconnected world. To be faithful to our mission, our core curriculum ought to aim for an integral understanding of the interdependence of human cultures and how human cultural traditions have evolved over time. Such cross-cultural understanding will equip our students to live in an increasingly globalized world and appreciate the common human dignity found in all peoples.

### **Requirement Objectives**

A course or co-curricular experience which satisfies the “Cross-Cultural Understanding” core will:

1. Introduce students to a different culture and helps students think about what constitutes a cultural identity and the fundamental assumptions which underlie cultural differences.
2. Provide students with the opportunity to understand and appreciate the perspectives of others who encounter and interpret the world in significantly different ways, while simultaneously providing students with new perspectives on their own culture.
3. Explore the theoretical, methodological, and/or ethical issues involved in encountering cultural differences.
4. Provide students with significant opportunity to use their understanding of cultural differences to reflect on their own behavior and decisions.

### **Recommendations**

- On-going faculty development support is needed to develop new courses in cross-cultural understanding, including support in developing interdisciplinary courses, and assistance in creating new learning communities.
- Update College web page with links to courses addressing diversity and cross-cultural issues as means of attracting AHANA students.
- The Theology department is encouraged to offer electives focusing on world religions (i.e. Islam, Judaism, Asian Religions) and comparative studies (i.e. Christianity Among the World Religions; Religions of the Book: Islam, Judaism, Christianity; Hispanic-American Religions Experience and Theology) that students might choose to satisfy this requirement.

## **Foreign Language Engagement**

**All students will engage in a foreign language experience in one of the following ways:**

*Option 1.* Develop language proficiency through one of the following experiences:

- one advanced course in literature, conversation, or civilization taught in a foreign language

- a study-abroad experience in a non-English speaking country
- a one semester foreign language intensive internship
- two semesters of foreign language intensive community service
- a substantial research paper utilizing primarily foreign language sources.

*Option 2.* Two semesters of introductory foreign language, in a new language that a student has not studied previously.

## **Rationale**

To prepare students better for an increasingly global and diverse world, Providence College expects students to be engaged in foreign language experiences that will broaden their perspectives, help them grow intellectually, and understand what it means to be a citizen of the world. Languages are vehicles for culture and communication, and learning a foreign language promotes greater cultural understanding and appreciation.

Significant numbers of students enter Providence College having studied a foreign language. These are typically European languages, such as French, Spanish, German or Italian. Further, students have indicated an interest and desire to build on that foundation either by continuing their previous foreign language study or by starting the study of a less commonly taught language, e.g. Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Portuguese, or Russian. Foreign language engagement is critical to fostering intercultural communication and cultural competency.

Providence College should strongly encourage and support students to participate in an international experience. The international experience will encourage students to reflect on their cultural encounters, and critically examine their own culture. This could take the form of a traditional semester or year-long academic experience, a summer or intersession program, or an international internship or service experience.

## **Requirement Objectives**

The course or experience will:

1. Build on previous foreign language study or introduce study of new foreign language.
2. Develop the four language skills, namely, speaking, listening, reading, and writing in a foreign language.
3. Provide students opportunities to use foreign language study as a means to explore cultural differences.

## **Recommendations**

- The study of less commonly taught languages –such Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Portuguese, and Russian - should be offered regularly by Providence College. The College should hire additional day school faculty, including adjuncts and special lecturers to meet this need.
- The Dean of International Studies should investigate the possibility of a pilot program involving Dominican friars and institutions abroad that might be able to provide PC students with some opportunities to combine service and foreign language.

- There should be one person or place on campus where all of the various activities related to study abroad, international service and/or internship opportunities, national or local service and or internship opportunities working with diverse populations or involving foreign language are coordinated. The activities of Dean of International Studies, the Balfour Center, Campus Ministry, Career Services, and the major programs and the core, should be coordinated to maximize the availability of opportunities for developing “cross-cultural understanding.”
- The Dean of International Studies should provide formal and informal post-immersion opportunities for students to share and reflect upon their international experiences.
- Providence College should provide all faculty and staff involved in student advising with training and development opportunities to integrate these new dimensions of the core into student life.

### **C. Integrative Component**

Curricular integration occurs, ultimately, only when each individual student perceives and understands the inter-relationship between course subjects as part of a coherent liberal education. We can assist our students’ capacity to integrate what he or she has learned in two ways: first, we can encourage students to reflect on their personal learning goals and how to organize intentionally their course of study to achieve them; second, we can create institutional mechanisms that create interconnections among disparate areas of study. To assist students in their individual task of knowledge integration, we recommend creation of Freshman Cornerstone and Senior Capstone experiences linked over four years of study by an e-portfolio. These three requirements should be considered as part of a whole which will make the core curriculum more transparent to and intentional for students. Along with careful consideration of curricular integration in all core courses, we recommend learning communities, use of a pedagogy of disputed questions, and a new president-led one campus/one disputed question tradition as institutional practices for promoting a vision of an integrated liberal education experience at Providence College.

### **Freshman Cornerstone Seminar**

**A 1 ½ credit course to be taken in the fall semester of the freshman year.**

#### **Rationale**

The last Mission-related learning goal is that “students demonstrate an understanding of the Core Curriculum as the heart and soul of a Providence College education.” Fulfilling this goal is the primary aim of the Freshman Cornerstone Seminar. As Providence College students embark on their four years of education in the Dominican tradition, students need the opportunity to think critically about themselves and to contemplate how a liberal education in the Roman Catholic and Dominican tradition can contribute to a fulfilling life. The seminar’s rigorous analysis of liberal education will include readings about its purposes ranging from classical works (i.e. *Protagoras*) to those of modern and contemporary authors (i.e. Cardinal Newman, Arnold, MacIntyre, Nussbaum). Increasing their understanding of the goals of a Providence College education will assist our students in approaching the core curriculum thoughtfully and making coherent course choices consistent with a vision of their personal educational goals. If we want a

Providence College education to be truly transformative then we have a responsibility to teach our students to be reflective thinkers about that education.

The one disputed question/one campus topic will help to frame this seminar. The instructor, drawing on his/her particular disciplinary expertise, will lead discussions of the topic in ways that demonstrate how an integrated liberal education can illuminate the question. Assigned readings will address both the nature of liberal education and the disputed question. The seminar will include a specific review of core requirements including presentations on some of the courses that satisfy them. Students will be encouraged to reflect on their personal educational goals, and will produce a first reflection paper articulating these goals to be placed in their e-portfolio. The seminar also will afford the opportunity for discussions of the College's cultural and intellectual atmosphere and the appropriate norms of academic inquiry and discourse.

### **Requirement Objectives**

The Freshmen Cornerstone Seminar will:

1. Act as the gateway experience to the core curriculum education and its mission-related goals.
2. Identify the unique characteristics of a liberal arts, Catholic, Dominican education, and prepare students to take full advantage of their core curriculum opportunities at Providence College. Appropriate readings should be assigned.
3. Immerse students in the College community, for instance, in the common academic community through participation in one campus, one disputed question.
4. Immerse students in the social, political, and cultural life of the greater Providence community.
5. Offer students an opportunity to reflect on educational and personal developmental goals, including a personal statement to be included in the e-portfolio.
6. Introduce students to the integrative importance and technical skills surrounding e-portfolios.

### **Recommendations**

- Seminar enrollment should be approximately 15 students.
- Seminar should meet once per week for 75 minutes.
- To the extent feasible, student members of DWC seminars should be assigned to the same Cornerstone seminar. This joint assignment will build on the intellectual community created in DWC and permit linkage between the DWC experience and the Freshman Cornerstone.
- Faculty will teach a Cornerstone as an addition to a normal course load with appropriate overload compensation.
- Seminar instructors should draw on campus resources, such as the Library, the Office of Residence Life, the Office of Student Activities, Involvement, and Leadership, the Office of Safety and Security, the Chaplain's Office, and the Advising Program in order to introduce them and how they may enhance the students' academic experience.

- Seminar instructors should utilize other members of the Providence College community in this course. Faculty and staff with different areas of expertise and upper-class students can help to enhance the seminar experience.

## **E-Portfolio**

Each student will maintain an e-portfolio during her or his entire Providence College experience documenting fulfillment of core objectives. It will include reflection essays on academic and personal goals, examples of completed work, and analyses of interconnections among academic courses and experiences. Each e-portfolio will begin with a reflection paper on the student's liberal education goals written as a part of the Freshman Cornerstone experience. During the Senior Capstone, students will complete another reflection paper on their liberal education at Providence College and how that education prepares them for the future.

In addition, students will be encouraged to document participation in co-curricular activities in areas such as:

- Civic engagement (i.e., service-learning courses, political action, student leadership);
- Cultural enrichment (concert, theatre, or lecture attendance, museum visits, performance participation);
- Personal development (community service, religious and spiritual life, and residence life involvements).

Students will learn how to document these experiences in their Freshman Cornerstone which may include requirements for participation in one or more of those areas.

### **Rationale**

The e-portfolio provides the bridge between the Freshman Cornerstone and Senior Capstone seminars in which they record and reflect upon their achievements at Providence College. In the portfolio, students will document the academic work they have completed. This will offer them an opportunity to demonstrate a variety of skills and competencies acquired in their courses at Providence College, including their liberal arts core courses. Core proficiencies such as research skills, analytical skills, written and oral communication skills, technological and computation skills as well as civic-engagement, and cross-cultural understanding, will be highlighted in specific examples of submitted course work. The portfolio also provides students an opportunity to integrate particular skills and experiences they have gained through a variety of internships, paid and volunteer work, international experiences, and other activities. Decision-making, problem-solving and leadership skills, as well as time management, organizational, and collaborative skills again can be demonstrated with specific examples from these experiences. Students also will document their co-curricular involvements. The portfolio enables the student to present a complete picture of his or her total learning experience and provides students with a tool for integrating a multiplicity and variety of experiences.

Essential to the holistic and transformative education of students is reflection and critical self-examination. Beginning with the reflection paper on their educational aspirations in their Freshman Cornerstone Seminar, keeping the portfolio will encourage students to be intentional and purposeful in how they approach their educational experience. The process of documenting their achievements will demonstrate and promote reflection on

their personal and academic growth. As such, it provides an important bridge between the core and major, as well as between curricular and co-curricular experiences.

Finally, the portfolio is an important means by which the institution as a whole can document accountability by providing a means of assessing the success of the core curriculum in achieving its stated goals.

### **Recommendations**

- A Committee of faculty, staff and students should be constituted to develop frameworks, a process for evaluating portfolios, and assessment measures for the core proficiencies.
- Although there will not be minimal requirements imposed on students for co-curricular involvement, the “Dean of the Core” may develop benchmarks to guide students for minimal participation in these activities per semester.

## **Senior Capstone Seminar**

**A 1 ½ credit course to be taken in the fall semester of the senior year.**

### **Rationale**

As the culminating experience of the core curriculum, the Senior Capstone Seminar, like the Freshman Cornerstone Seminar consisting of 15 students, is meant to “help illuminate the key questions of human existence relating to life’s purpose and meaning.” Students will discuss and reflect upon their transformative experience at Providence College. With the understanding that the pursuit of Veritas does not end with College, attention will be given to the life of the student after graduation. Questions of vocation will be examined. As the bookend to the Freshman Cornerstone Seminar, the Senior Capstone Seminar will re-examine their liberal arts education from their changed perspective as seniors. As they complete their undergraduate education, students will be able to reflect on the inter-connections among what they have learned and perceive knowledge as an integrated whole. The seminar will be conducted during the fall semester so that students may draw upon it as they contemplate their future career and/or graduate school plans.

In addition to studying the nature of a liberal arts education, students in the Capstone Seminar will participate in the one disputed question/one campus discussion. This will create an opportunity for inter-action among Freshman Cornerstone and Senior Capstone participants. Instructors of both should bring students together for joint discussion between the freshmen and seniors on the chosen topic. In the Senior Capstone students will review and make a presentation on the contents of their e-portfolio and how it documents their College achievements. Capstone instructors will evaluate and certify successful completion of the e-portfolio graduation requirement.

### **Requirement Objectives**

The Senior Capstone Seminar will:

1. Act as the culminating experience for the core curriculum education.

2. Offer students an opportunity to reflect critically on their academic and personal achievements, in order to evaluate their transformative experience from a holistic perspective. This includes a personal statement for the e-portfolio.
3. Reexamine the unique characteristics of a liberal arts, Catholic, Dominican education as studied in the Freshmen Cornerstone Seminar, with an emphasis on its implication for a student's vocation, personal and spiritual development. Appropriate readings should be assigned.

### **Recommendations**

- Seminar enrollment should be limited to approximately 15 students.
- Seminar should meet once per week for 75 minutes.
- To the extent feasible, students should be reunited in their Capstone with students from their Freshman Cornerstone.
- Faculty will teach a Capstone as an addition to a normal course load with appropriate overload compensation.

## **Admissions and Student Orientation**

**We recommend that the College administration review both the Admissions and Student Orientation processes with a view to enhancing the presentation of the core curriculum.**

The Admissions process needs to highlight Providence College's distinctive core curriculum as the central component of the "transformative" PC experience. This will require expanded discussion of the core in all presentations and publications. On Family Day, a major display should call attention to the importance of the core in a Providence College student's education. These changes in the admissions process should be followed up during new student orientation with more emphasis on the core than now occurs. This means allocating a substantial amount of time for discussion of the core, new presentations on the importance of the core to our overall curriculum, discussion of the Mission-related learning goals, and, finally, an overview of the components of the core curriculum. The theme of all of this should be the integrated character of core curriculum. We should aim at providing our matriculating students with an understanding of the rationale, logic, and components of the core as they embark on their Freshman Cornerstone experience.

## **Disputed Questions Pedagogy**

**The Committee recommends that Core Courses incorporate the pedagogy of *disputatio* ("the disputed question"), a particularly Dominican intellectual tradition. Adapted to the Providence College classrooms of the 21st Century, the tradition of the "disputed question" offers a pedagogical method that can enliven our core as well as our major curriculum courses.**

As a model of intellectual inquiry, the *disputatio* expects active learning rather than the passive receipt of authoritative opinion. Students are encouraged to formulate provocative questions and use their reason to seek after truth. Nothing could be further from rote memorization of the views of authorities. As Aquinas himself said, "The study

of philosophy is not done in order to know what men have thought, but rather to know how truth herself stands” (Chenu, 1964. p. 28).

For some courses, instructors would formulate as disputed questions the key issues they intend to raise. These would become part of the syllabus and offer students a guide of the questions studied in the course. As each question is raised, students and the instructor would analyze critically various responses to the question, argue the merits and flaws in the arguments, and formulate a reasoned response. In some cases, classes might reach consensus on the disputed questions, at other times differing conclusions might be reached. In either case, the instructor could assist the class to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of each argument. The Center for Teaching Excellence should make discussion of the integration of *disputatio* into the Providence College curriculum a top priority.

The aim of this pedagogy would not be to lead students to a particular answer but to encourage them to commit themselves to a definite position that they could defend against contrary views. Such a pedagogical method would demand active inquiry rather than passive learning, as well as model a search for truth in place of acceptance of a lazy undergraduate relativism. In addition, we would want our students, in the spirit of *disputatio*, to be adept at formulating their own questions. Learning which questions to ask may be the most important element in seeking the truth that gives life meaning.

## Learning Communities

**The Committee recommends that “Learning Communities” (i.e., two courses in different disciplines taken simultaneously by the same group of students) be developed to address a common topic or theme from different academic perspectives.**

Providence College attempts to provide an education for the whole person—body, mind and soul—that bridges the common divides between matter and spirit, God and creation, faith and reason. While for many people, faith and reason stand in opposition to each other, according to the Thomistic educational vision, each is viewed as a distinct avenue to truth—partners in the academic life—inextricably conjoined in the pursuit of truth. The Dominican pursuit of truth proceeds from the assumption that all truth, from whatever source, points to a single Truth, Who is ultimately God.

While reason relies on the natural resources of the mind, faith draws upon revelation, and thereby offers human reason an inspiration and incentive which it could never attain on its own. Intellectual striving is really the striving of the whole person, placing no limitations on this search. It is the integrity of this search for truth which prompts the Committee to recommend “learning communities” so that a particular topic can be approached from a variety of perspectives. Scientific advances can be examined by the scientists while the ethical considerations of these can be explored by the philosophers and theologians. Geopolitical movements can be studied in their historical context while their effects can be scrutinized by the sociologists and political scientists. The history and the literature of a particular period, the politics and the films of a particular era, the anthropology and the theology of an ethnic group—partnerships of faculty/courses can be created to help students realize that “pursuit of knowledge, understanding, and wisdom does not take place in isolation but in the context of community and the larger world....”

While team-teaching and “learning communities” can each contribute to this integrated approach to education, the creation of “learning communities” would be more cost-effective. We recommend that pairs of courses be envisioned and created to make conscious connections between objectives of the core curriculum and the interests of individual majors.

### **One Campus/One Disputed Question:**

Each spring, the PC President, with the advice of student-faculty committee, will identify a disputed question that will be the focus of campus study and discussion in the following year. This question will be a common assignment in all Freshman Cornerstone Seminar and Senior Capstone Seminar sections, recommended as a common element in all relevant courses, and addressed by invited speakers and other campus-wide events over the course of the year.

#### **Rationale**

In selecting annually a question for debate and discussion, the president can enhance the spirit of academic community at the College. Every year a question will define a common area of intellectual inquiry to define the academic year and focus attention on a significant moral, ethical, political, social, or scientific issue confronting the nation and the world. Adopting the disputed question format, perhaps supplemented with a suggested common book or other readings, creates a link to PC’s Dominican tradition in a highly visible manner. It also raises the level of intellectual discourse, provides opportunities for values clarification, and self-reflection as the PC community addresses significant moral, ethical, political, socio-economic, and scientific issues confronting the nation and the world. In their Freshman Cornerstone Seminars, incoming students will encounter the College not as individual classes on independent subjects, but as a united academic community thinking through a single disputed question. As our youngest students, they will form an immediate intellectual connection with our senior students who will have in common the same inquiry in their Senior Capstone. To the extent that faculty members adopt the question in their own courses, this common connection can stimulate intellectual exchanges across the entire campus. If discussion of the common disputed question is supplemented with lectures from invited speakers, dramatic productions, art exhibits, or, even athletic competitions, succeeding years at Providence College will be remembered by the disputed questions discussed that year.

This experience will provide common ground between both different College constituencies and between different aspects of the College experience. Everyone on campus—administrators, staff, faculty, and students—will have an intellectual experience in common. With the one campus/ one disputed question animating different facets of College life, students will experience the integration of knowledge within their core courses, between core and their majors, and between their academic and co-curricula. A one disputed question/one campus experience will underscore that a mission centered curriculum must transcend the classroom and integrate the living and community experiences of students. We believe that the time has come to create a new Providence College tradition that will actively engage the entire College community in a joint intellectual endeavor.

## **Required Credits for Graduation**

**Students must complete 119 credit hours for graduation.**

Total credit hours need to be increased to accommodate three additional credits for Freshman Cornerstone Seminar and Senior Capstone Seminar.

### **IV. Implementation**

The Core Curriculum Review Committee recognizes the fundamental challenges to implementing the curriculum reforms recommended herein. We also acknowledge the practical limitations on the capacity for change germane to any institution. On the other hand, our compulsion to engage in a dynamic pursuit of mission-related educational excellence has defined our recommendations. Confirmation was provided by Derek Bok who writes, “Quietly but steadily, the ground is being prepared for an eventual shift in American colleges away from a teacher-oriented system featuring lectures delivered to passive audiences to a more learner-centered process in which students become more actively involved in their own education and professors adapt their teaching in accordance with more complex understandings of human learning.” We respectfully advocate that the curriculum reforms proposed herein incorporate learning goals designed to stimulate our students to be more active participants in their own holistic educational experience. Accordingly, institutional support for the proposed curriculum must be a clear priority in the College’s Strategic Plan and in the fund-raising efforts of the Office of Institutional Advancement. Toward this end, we advance specific implementation strategies as outlined below.

#### **A. Core Administrative Structure**

If the core curriculum is to be regarded organically (i.e. as an evolving set of curricular developments) and as a priority at Providence College, that stature must be reflected in the core’s administrative structure. A senior administrative position responsible for administering the core curriculum assisted by a permanent College faculty / student committee will need to be created. Such a “Dean of the Core”, as referred to in this report, would be responsible for all tasks needed for maintaining the integrity of the core, such as: encouraging development of courses that meet core objectives, certifying co-curricular experiences that satisfy core objectives, monitoring the fulfillment of the core objectives in designated core courses, recruiting faculty for core instruction (particularly in DWC, the Freshman Cornerstone, and Senior Capstone courses), developing learning communities, organizing assessment of all core courses, organizing core-related faculty development, and encouraging use of disputed questions pedagogy. The “Dean of the Core” may also be an instrumental player in College efforts to seek grants and other funding opportunities for the enhancement of the core.

The first administrative task that must be accomplished is approval of courses to satisfy the objectives of the new core. As soon as a new core curriculum is approved, we recommend immediate appointment of the permanent faculty/student core curriculum committee, as described above, which will be authorized to conduct this review. Until a "Dean of the Core" position can be established, a senior academic administrator ought to chair this committee. The committee will need to invite departments and faculty to submit proposals for courses to meet the new objectives, review submitted proposals, and

approve those that satisfy the objectives. This work will need to be accomplished before implementation of the core can begin.

## **B. Key Funding Initiatives**

Operating funds, designated endowed monies, plus increased foundation and government grants are needed to support administrative, staffing, and faculty development needs for the overall core curriculum. Specific needs are cited below:

- **Dean of the Core**

As per above, funding will be needed to support a core administrative structure.

- **Development of Western Civilization Renewal**

Designated endowed monies plus foundation and government grants are needed to support the costs of a renewed DWC program, including increased administrative, staffing, and faculty development needs. Such needs include:

- i. Faculty and facilities to accommodate an ideal class size of forty-five students in order to support the role of the weekly 2-hour seminar in the renewal of DWC. It is the strong conviction of the DWC committee and the CCRC that the vision of the role of the seminar in the renewal of DWC will be impossible to achieve if the size of the small group meetings rises above fifteen students.
- ii. Faculty development initiatives need to be funded, including a year-end review for DWC faculty, a year-end seminar for PC faculty and/or invited experts (modeled after the Rhodes College Seminars) and a significant orientation process for new DWC faculty that may include attendance in DWC classes and seminars, as well as the year-end review and faculty seminar.
- iii. The DWC committee and CCRC view the faculty development component of the renewed DWC program as an essential component of ensuring the on-going quality of the program. Since the College has committed to maintaining the central role of the course in the Core curriculum, concomitant resources must be assured.

- **Implementation of Integrative Component**

Curricular integration occurs, ultimately, only when each individual student perceives and understands the inter-relationship between course subjects as part of a coherent liberal education. To guide students in their individual task of knowledge integration, we have recommended creation of Freshman Cornerstone and Senior Capstone experiences linked over four years of study by utilization of a student-generated electronic portfolio.

This proposal has funding implications in terms of faculty development as a precursor to the offering of the cornerstone and capstone experiences. Further, there will be significant staffing issues, not only for the “bookend” experiences, but also for the (yet to be determined) process of mentoring and advising students during their four years of study.

- **Communications Center**

Funds will be needed to develop a Communication Center staffed by professionals to assist faculty and students across the curriculum with writing intensive courses, required core writing assignments, and student oral presentation skills.

Responsibilities include assistance to faculty in developing writing and oral presentation assignments, providing faculty development in the evaluation of student writing and oral presentations, and providing assistance to students in preparing

assignments and enhancing skills. Such a Center may present certain endowment opportunities.

- **Faculty Development and Teaching Preparation**

Although cited elsewhere, the issue of faculty development and teaching preparation deserves separate mention. Faculty encouraged to teach in the core, whether in DWC or other core courses, must be prepared to meet general educational goals demanded in the core, such as integration of knowledge. Courses offered to prepare majors in a discipline will usually not be the best courses to introduce non-majors to the stated learning objectives of core requirements. Hence, we recommend a significant financial commitment to faculty development for course design and teaching preparation for the core.

- **Additional Funding Considerations**

- i. Address adequate staffing for the Science requirement
- ii. Address adequate staffing for the Foreign Language Engagement requirement
- iii. Creation of a Quantitative Reasoning or Quantitative Literacy Center
- iv. Enhance the aesthetic environment on and off campus
- v. Provide staffing for the offering of less commonly taught languages, e.g., Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Russian and/or Portuguese
- vi. Acquisition of appropriate property for student, faculty and alumni retreats

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# **APPENDIX**

## **A**

*Excerpt from:*

## **Renewing Providence College's Development of Western Civilization Program**

**A Proposal**

**By**

**The Core Curriculum Review DWC sub-committee**

*Submitted to the CCRC – December, 2006*

**(The full report may be found on ANGEL: Faculty Information Site)**

### **3. DWC Syllabus and Pedagogy**

The guiding principle of the syllabus and pedagogy of the renewed DWC is that the program will emphasize the reading and the analysis in writing and discussion of important primary texts in their cultural context. The pedagogy will aim for the active engagement of the student in the learning process, engendering a critical encounter with the events, personalities, ideas, and artistic achievements which make up Western cultural history. Accordingly, the syllabi of the program must be carefully written to attain a greater balance between breadth and depth. It is assumed that Honors sections of Civ will require additional requirements beyond those that are outlined here.

It is anticipated that the Faculty Council of the DWC program will establish a general syllabus framework with a number of common texts which will be studied by all students in the DWC Program. There is clear evidence (outlined, for example, in *Alive at the Core*) that there are significant benefits to student learning when everyone in a program reads the same text at the same time. Accordingly, we suggest that there might be as many as five common texts in a term with thirteen seminar meetings, so as to create a common experience among the students. The selection of texts and disputed questions are expected to vary from term to term and over time at the discretion of the Faculty Council. Extracurricular programming on campus (for example, dramatic productions, lectures, art exhibitions, etc) should be timed to coincide and supplement these 'common experience' readings. Individual teams will choose the remaining readings on their syllabus to suit their members' particular expertise and their team's thematic concerns.

All of the course's texts will be investigated in light of a set of disputed questions concerning for example, the nature of God, the good life, the relationship of man and the natural world and the importance of beauty. Apart from these texts and questions a renewed DWC encourages the teams to explore various ways in which the course can be taught.

DWC will be taught through a combination of large and small group meetings. Normally the large group sessions (either three 50-minute sessions or two 75-minute sessions) and one small group session (2 hours) will be keyed to a primary text, with one work usually being considered each week. (In certain instances, where length or degree of difficulty requires some concession, abridgements of works may be used.) The purpose of the large

group meetings is to establish the cultural context for a deep reading of the primary text under review. There are a variety of ways in which this may be achieved. Faculty are encouraged to experiment with various approaches to using these large group meetings. Likewise, small group meetings may use varying techniques that place emphasis on the analysis of the primary text. Because the texts and disputed questions will be the focus of the course rather than a narrative approach, new models of interdisciplinarity are expected to flourish. Over time the pedagogy and structure of the program may be modified in the light of assessment results.

Students will be expected to write a minimum of fifteen pages of polished writing each semester over the course of several writing assignments, with opportunities for revision where needed. During the second-year of DWC, targeted library-intensive assignments will guide students in the development of research and analysis skills.

The ideal class size should be limited to forty-five students per section, with the three professors each being responsible for fifteen students. It is the strong conviction of the committee that its vision of the role of the seminar in this renewal of DWC will be impossible to achieve if the size of the small group meetings rises above fifteen students.

#### **4. DWC Administration**

##### *Director and Associate Director of the Development of Western Civilization*

These newly conceived administrative positions will oversee all sections of DWC (regular and honors). Both of these positions will be filled by tenured members of the DWC faculty holding the rank of Associate or Full Professor. The Director shall be appointed in the same manner as departmental chairpersons; that is, elected by the duly qualified electors of the DWC faculty subject to presidential approval. The Director will appoint an Associate Director, subject to presidential approval. Both the Director and Associate Director will serve three year terms, renewable one time. Their responsibilities will include but not be limited to; general program administration (i.e. budgeting, facilities planning, course scheduling, team assignments, etc.), faculty recruitment, faculty development, the evaluation of the teaching performance of program faculty in DWC courses for purposes of tenure and promotion, and on-going assessment of student learning outcomes. The Director will work in conjunction with the Director of the liberal arts honors program on the staffing of the honors program.

##### *DWC faculty*

The faculty of the program in a given academic year shall consist of all those members of the ordinary faculty who have taught in at least one semester of a DWC course (regular or honors) in the previous two academic years. Members of the DWC faculty will constitute the body of “duly qualified electors” for the program. The Program Director shall call a meeting of all DWC faculty members, at least once each semester to discuss faculty concerns and whenever election of the Director or Faculty Council members is required.

##### *Faculty Council*

A six person Faculty Council of the DWC faculty, five of whom will be elected and one who will be appointed by the President, will advise the Director on all matters pertaining to program administration. Members of the Council shall be elected to staggered three year terms. At any one time, faculty members teaching in first year DWC must fill three positions and faculty members teaching in second year DWC must fill three positions.

Any academic department providing at least one-fifth of the DWC faculty shall be guaranteed representation by at least one member of their department. The Director, the Associate Director and the Director of the liberal arts honors program serve *ex-officio*. The Director shall cast the deciding vote to break ties. The council's responsibilities will include but not be limited to: selecting those common texts to be used in all sections in a given year, selecting those common disputed questions to be addressed in a given year, developing and monitoring procedures for constituting teams, developing and monitoring guidelines for student workload and grading consistency across teams, assisting in the development of an assessment plan, and advising the Director on all other matters pertaining to the program.

*DWC Faculty Handbook, DWC Student Handbook*

The Director shall produce and revise as needed a DWC Faculty Handbook describing program administration and the duties of DWC faculty. In addition a DWC Student Handbook will be developed that will cover policies, expectations, library resources, and academic integrity issues for DWC students.

## **5. DWC Staffing**

A primary goal of the Director is to have the College's best teachers in the DWC program. The ideal instructor is someone who, because he or she has mastered essential intellectual skills, can model these skills for the students in the course. Other goals include; maintaining some continuity among teams, enhancing the ability of the Chairs of departments to better plan ahead, fostering rapport among team members, and encouraging teams to experiment with new approaches to interdisciplinarity.

·All DWC instructors should be drawn (normally) from the ranks of the ordinary faculty; more senior, tenured faculty will be preferred.

·A priority of the Director will be the recruitment of faculty so as to create the largest possible pool for the staffing of DWC. The VPAA should assist in this effort to assure equity in the distribution of the responsibility of staffing among the humanities departments.

·Any faculty member, whatever his or her discipline, would be eligible to teach in DWC, provided the faculty member either a) has already taught in DWC, or b) goes through the required faculty development orientation.

·Instructors and their department chairs should sign renewable letters of agreement committing to a fixed number of years in the program. Tenure-track probationary faculty should be limited to two years of service in the program.

·Three person teams, drawn from different departments, will be the norm, however the Director in consultation with the Faculty Council may choose to experiment with a variety of team configurations.

·Normally, teams will instruct two sections which will constitute 2/3 of a faculty teaching load. When the expansion of the pool of available faculty permits, a single section, one-third load option or a single-semester commitment may be available to encourage the widest participation of faculty from across campus.

## 6. DWC Faculty Development

As stated in the course purpose “the DWC program seeks to help students develop the intellectual habits and skills central to the liberal arts: deep reading, thoughtful reflection, and the articulation of reasoned arguments.” In order to most effectively fulfill the learning objectives of the course and also to model the life-long learning that we wish to inspire in our students the DWC review committee recommends a three-component faculty development plan.

### *Year-end 2-day Review for DWC faculty*

Day 1: Each team of instructors from the just completed academic year will complete a thorough survey instrument to be used for assessment by the Directors in consultation with the Faculty Council. Teams will also produce a summary of their experiences to be shared among other teams. Areas of review will include but not be limited to the common texts, the team-chosen texts, student assignments, and the level of achievement of the course learning objectives. Day 2: All teams for a given year will meet to discuss the summaries that were generated on Day 1. Recommendations to the Faculty Council would result from these sessions.

### *Year-end Seminar Week*

PC faculty and/or invited experts will lead seminars examining primary work(s) from the Western tradition and its sources. (These would likely be modeled after the Rhodes College Seminars.) Book(s) may have been chosen as common texts for the coming year. Participation in the seminar should be required for new DWC faculty but be open to all PC faculty. Financial compensation would be provided.

### *Orientation*

Faculty that have committed to teaching in the DWC program shall normally undergo a significant orientation that may include attendance in DWC class meetings, seminars and the year-end seminar week. Compensation in some form such as a one semester course reduction, overload pay or professional development bonus would be provided.

### *Note on Funding*

We view the faculty development component of the renewed DWC program as an essential piece of ensuring the on-going quality of the program. Since the College has committed to maintaining the central role of the course in our Core curriculum, concomitant resources must be guaranteed. We view these programs as extremely attractive opportunities for endowment by appropriate donors identified by the Development Office.

# **APPENDIX B**

## Public and Community Service Major/Theology minor

Code: FL = foreign language, IW = Intensive Writing, CVC = civic understanding, CCU = Cross-cult understanding, OC = oral communication, QR = Quant reasoning, E= Free Elect  
 NS = Nat Sci, THL = Theology, ETH = Ethics, PHL = Philosophy, SS = Soc. Sci, A = Art

<u>Freshman 1<sup>st</sup> sem</u>	<u>Credits</u>
DWC 101 - Civ	5
PSP 101-Intro Public Service	3 <b>CVC</b>
MTH 107 Math for Bus I	3 <b>QR</b>
SWK 101 Intro to Hum Serv	3 <b>SS</b>
Frosh cornerstone	1

<u>Freshman 2<sup>nd</sup> Sem</u>	<u>Credits</u>
DWC 101 - Civ	5
PHL 103 -Intro to Philosophy	3 <b>PHL</b>
EDU 221- Char Ind Spec Needs	3 <b>E</b>
SOC 201- Intro to Sociology	3 <b>E</b>

<u>Sophomore 1<sup>st</sup> Sem</u>	<u>Credits</u>
DWC 201 - Civ	5
PSP 202 - Found Org'l Serv	3 <b>OC</b>
PSC 101 - Intro to Politics	3 <b>E</b>
HPM 201 – Amer Health Care Sys	3 psprack

<u>Sophomore 2<sup>nd</sup> Sem</u>	<u>Credits</u>
DWC 202 - Civ	5
THL 312-Old Testament	3 minor
PSP 320-Practicum	3
PSP 302-Cult Div	3 <b>CCU</b>

<u>Junior 1<sup>st</sup> Sem</u>	<u>Credits</u>
PSP 321 Practium	3
ENG 381 Creative Writing	3 <b>A</b>
PHL 309 Biomedical Ethics	3 <b>ETH</b> psprack
BIO 103 Human Bio	3 <b>NS</b> psprack
THL 376 Cath Soc Thought	3 minor

<u>Junior 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester</u>	<u>Credits</u>
PSP 301 Com Serv Am Cult	3
THL 470 Women In Christianity	3 minor
EPS 118 Intro to Meteorology	3 <b>NS</b>
THL 362 The Sacraments	3 <b>THL</b> minor
SWK 253-Human Behavior	3 <b>IW</b>

<u>Senior 1<sup>st</sup> Semester</u>	<u>Credits</u>
PSP 480 Capstone	3
PSP 450 Internship	3 <b>FL</b>
ENG 441 St in Lit:Nature Writing	3 <b>E</b>
PSP 490 Independent Study	3 <b>E</b>
TDF 214 Ballet	3 <b>E</b>
SENIOR Capstone	1

<u>Senior 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester</u>	<u>Credits</u>
PSP 481 Capstone	3
PSP 490 Independent Study	3 <b>E</b>
WMS 101 Intro Women's Studies	3 <b>E</b>
THL 220-New Test Lit Thl	3 <b>THL</b> minor
THL 477 Pastoral Counseling	3 minor

## Biochem Major/Math Minor, with two-course Foreign Language option

<b><u>Freshman 1<sup>st</sup> sem</u></b>		<b><u>Credits</u></b>		<b><u>Freshman 2<sup>nd</sup> Sem</u></b>		<b><u>Credits</u></b>	
DWC 101		5		DWC 102		5	
MTH 131	Calc An Geom I	3	<b>QR</b> , minor	MTH 132	Calc An Gem II	3	minor
CHM 121	Intro Chem	4		CHM 122	Intro Chem	4	
BIO 103	Gen Bio I	4	<b>NS</b>	BIO 104	Gen Bio II	4	
Frosh cornerstone		1					
<b><u>Sophomore 1<sup>st</sup> Sem</u></b>		<b><u>Credits</u></b>		<b><u>Sophomore 2<sup>nd</sup> Sem</u></b>		<b><u>Credits</u></b>	
DWC 201		5		DWC 202		5	
EPS 101	Gen Phys	4	<b>NS</b>	EPS 102	Gen Physics	4	
CHM 221	Organic Chem	4		CHM 222	Organic Chem	4	
SPN 101	Elem Spanish	3	<b>FL</b>	SPN 102	Elem Spanish	3	<b>FL</b>
<b><u>Junior 1<sup>st</sup> Sem</u></b>		<b><u>Credits</u></b>		<b><u>Junior 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester</u></b>		<b><u>Credits</u></b>	
CHM 309	Biochem I	4		CHM 302	P-chem	3	
CHM 331	Adv An Chem I	4		CHM 3021	p-chem lab	1	
CHM 381	Chem Seminar	1		CHM 312	Biochem II	3	
PHL 202	Gen Eth	3	<b>ETH</b>	CHM 382	Chem Seminar	1	<b>OC</b>
MTH 217	Stats	3	minor	THL 220	New Test Lit Thl	3	<b>THL, IW</b>
MTH 301	Foundations	3	minor	HIS 104	US since 1877	3	<b>SS, CVC</b>
				ARH 104	Asian Art	3	<b>A, CCU</b>
<b><u>Senior 1<sup>st</sup> Semester</u></b>		<b><u>Credits</u></b>		<b><u>Senior 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester</u></b>		<b><u>Credits</u></b>	
BIO 308	Mod Genetics	4		BIO Elective (approved list)		3-4	
CHM 401	Inorganic	4		CHM 3101	Biochem lab	3	
CHM 481	Chem Seminar	1		CHM 482	Chem Seminar	1	
MTH 223	Calc An Geom III	3	minor	CHM Elective (approved list)		3-4	
PHL 309	Biomedical Ethics	3	<b>PHL</b>	THL 372	Contemp Moral Prob	3	<b>THL</b>
Non Dept Elective		3		MTH 304	Diff Equations	3	minor
SENIOR	Capstone	1					

# **APPENDIX C**

## Core Curriculum Review Sub-Committees

### Aesthetics

Donald Russell Bailey, Library  
Mary Bellhouse, Political Science  
Joan Branham, Art/Art History  
Mary Farrell, Theatre, Dance and Film  
Rev. Kenneth Gumbert, O.P., Theatre, Dance and Film  
Michele Holt, Music  
Daniel Horne, Marketing  
James Janecek, Art/Art History  
Paula Keogh, Publications  
Susan McCarthy, Political Science, CCRC liaison  
Rev. Thomas McGonigle, O.P., History, Chair  
Vance Morgan, Philosophy  
Jessica Pane, Campus Ministry  
Jane Lunin Perel, English/Women's Studies  
Margaret Reid, English

### Citizenship and Service

Yvonne Arruda, Dean of Enrollment Services  
Amy Baker, '07, CCRC liaison  
Richard Battistoni, Political Science  
Rev. Thomas Blau, O.P., Chaplain  
Joseph Cammarano, Political Science  
Kathryn Cooper, '07  
Denise Godin, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies  
Sharon Hay, SAIL Director  
Eric Hirsch, Sociology/Black Studies  
Christopher Houston, Military Science  
Tom King, Management, Chair  
Richard Kless, Director, Off-Campus Living Office  
Carl LaBranche, Associate Athletic Director Facilities/Game Management  
Paul Maloney, Finance, CCRC liaison  
Andrew Peach, Philosophy  
Raymond Sickinger, History/Public & Community Service Studies/Feinstein Institute  
Rev. John Paul Walker, O.P., Associate Chaplain, *alternate*

### Communications

Rev. Nicanor Austriaco, O.P., Biology  
Edgar Bailey, Library  
Patrick Breen, History  
James Carlson, Political Science, Chair  
Anthony DiDonna, '09  
Catherine Gordon-Seifert, Music  
Bruce Graver, English  
Stephen Lynch, English, CCRC liaison  
Bryan Marinelli, Director of Academic Services  
Sharon Murphy, History  
Michael O'Neill, Philosophy  
Patricia Vieira, College Relations and Planning

## **Development of Western Civilization**

Paul Czech, Chemistry and Biochemistry, Chair

Richard Grace, History

Carol Hartley, Accountancy

William Hogan, English

William Hudson, Political Science, CCRC liaison

James Keating, Theology

Timothy Mahoney, Philosophy

## **Global Awareness**

Nuria Alonso-Garcia, Modern Languages/Global Studies

Peter Costello, Philosophy

Matthew Cuddeback, Philosophy

Philip Devine, Philosophy

Athena Fokaidis, '09

Deborah Goessling, Education

Brooke Huminski, '07, CCRC liaison

Jacqueline Kiernan MacKay, Student Services

Margaret Manchester, History/American Studies, CCRC liaison

Susan McCarthy, Political Science, CCRC liaison

Ann Norton, Art/Art History

Charlotte O'Kelly, Sociology

Carmen Rolon, Education

Janice Schuster, Library

Pamela Sherer, Management

Edward Twyman, Dean of Multicultural Affairs

Craig Wood, Biology, Chair

## **Life's Meaning/Moral Reasoning**

John Abbruzzese, Philosophy

Rev. Albino Barrera, O. P., Theology/Economics

Arthur Dylag, Suites Complex Director

Michelle Jones, Management

Sandra Keating, Theology

Jill LaPoint, Associate Athletic Director

Marian Mattison, Social Work, Chair

Keith Morton, Public & Community Service Studies

Rev. Mark Nowel, O.P., Dean of Undergraduate Studies, CCRC liaison

Jay Pike, Chemistry and Biochemistry

Amber Rankin, '07

Sr. Leslie Straub, O.P., Sociology

Rev. Joseph Torchia, O.P., Philosophy

## **Quantitative Reasoning**

Carl Baer, Chemistry and Biochemistry

Kathleen Cornely, Chemistry and Biochemistry, CCRC liaison

Joseph Cosgrove, Philosophy

Liam Donohoe, Mathematics/Computer Science

Christine Hickey, Admission Counselor

Sr. Gail Himrod, O.P., Music

Jeffrey Hoag, Mathematics/Computer Science

**Quantitative Reasoning, *continued***

Mark Hyde, Political Science, Chair

Lynne Lawson, Engineering/Physics/Systems

Gregory Light, Management

Julie Mark, '07

Alli Nathan, Finance

Cornelius Riordan, Sociology