

## Annual Report of the Directors of the Core Curriculum for the 2013-2014 Academic Year

The major task of the Core Curriculum Committee and the Directors of the Core Curriculum in the 2013-14 academic year has been the implementation of the “Strategic Plan for the Assessment of Student Learning in the Core Curriculum” that the Faculty Senate approved in October 2012. The first item of business was the adoption of Goals and Objectives for the various components of the Core Curriculum. On December 6, 2013, the Faculty Senate approved the Goals and Objectives for FYS 101, ENG 101, PHI 101, RST 101, Field 1, Field 4, Field 6, the Diversity Attribute, the Ethics Attribute, and the Advanced Writing Intensive Attribute after they had been approved by the Core Curriculum Committee and the Educational Policy Committee of the Faculty Senate. In the spring of 2015 the Core Curriculum Committee continued its work on the Goals and Objectives for the remaining components of the Core Curriculum and forwarded them to the Senate and Educational Policy Committee for approval at the meeting of the Faculty Senate on May 2, 2014. This included the Goals and Objectives for Field 2, Field 3, and Field 7 as well as for the Global Awareness, Justice, and Oral Communication attributes. Only Field 5 (Social Sciences) remains without Goals and Objectives. The subject matter in this field and the departments that offer courses in Field 5 are so diverse that it has proven difficult formulating Goals and Objectives that stress what the courses in Field share in common. Hopefully this will be resolved over the summer.

The Core Curriculum began to collect artifacts for the assessment of student learning in the Core Curriculum in the spring semester of 2013. It continued to collect artifacts throughout the 2013-14 academic year and was in the process of implementing a plan for the assessment of student learning in the foundation course as well as in selected fields and attributes. But given the sheer enormity of this undertaking, the Core Directors decided in consultation with Richard Wall, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Christine Licata, chair of the Academics Committee of the Canisius College Board of Trustees, that assessment in the short term should be limited to the beginning and end of the Core Curriculum, that is, to foundation courses and the learning and skill attributes that could be assessed both at the point where the students satisfied these requirements of the Core and in the Core Capstone courses that Canisius students would take in their senior year. This decision was formally approved in the following resolution that the Faculty Senate adopted at its meeting on December 6, 2013:

Pursuant to consultation between the Co-Directors of the Core Curriculum and Rick Wall, Vice President of Academic Affairs at Canisius College, and Christine Licata, Chair of the Academics Committee of the Canisius College Board of Trustees, the Faculty Senate recommends revising the “Strategic Plan for the Assessment of Student Learning in the Core Curriculum” that the Senate approved on October 12, 2012, and to narrow the scope of assessment prior to the Middle States visitation in the spring of 2015. The Core Curriculum Committee should thus concentrate its assessment efforts on the beginning and end points of a student’s undergraduate education, that is, on the four foundation courses (FYS 101, ENG 101, PHI 101, RST 101) and on the summative assessment of the four knowledge attributes (Diversity, Ethics, Global Awareness, and Justice), the two skill attributes (Advanced Writing Intensive and Oral Communication), and Information Literacy in the Core Capstone and the courses in which these attributes are being taught. Assessment of student learning in the seven Fields of Knowledge, which is largely formative in nature and generally takes place at an

earlier stage in a student's undergraduate education, is to be deferred until some point in the future, although the Core Curriculum Committee will continue developing the Goals and Objectives for each of the Fields of Learning.

This resolution constitutes an addendum to the "Strategic Plan for the Assessment of Student Learning in the Core Curriculum" of October 12, 2012.

By the end of the 2013-14 academic year artifacts for the assessment of student learning in the Core Curriculum will have been collected for FYS 101, ENG 101, PHI 101, and RST 101 as well as for the Diversity, Ethics, and Advanced Writing Intensive attributes. Evaluation of these artifacts will be the charge of faculty committees that will meet during the summer of 2014 to conduct pilot studies of what students have learned in these components of the Core Curriculum. Assessment is already well under way in FYS 101 and RST 101, where it has resulted in some minor modification of what was being taught in these courses. In RST 101, for example, this revealed a need to add more material on Catholicism to show more clearly how it differed from other branches of Christianity. The Core Curriculum Committee has also collected artifacts on purely voluntary basis for the Oral Communication attribute, although systematic evaluation of these artifacts, as well as the artifacts for the Global Awareness and Justice attributes will probably not take place until the summer of 2015, at any event not until sufficient artifacts documenting what students have learned in these components of the Core Curriculum have been collected.

The Core Curriculum Committee has also worked with Kelly Lambert of the library staff to collect information related to Information Literacy. Core responsibility for the instruction of student information literacy skills ends with the four foundation courses; after that it becomes the responsibility of the departments and programs in which the individual students are majoring. In this respect, consult the resolution adopted by the Faculty Senate on February 1, 2013. After consultation with the administration, iSkills tests were administered to a cohort of 130 freshmen in the fall semester of 2013 and to a cohort of 96 graduating seniors in the spring semester of 2014. Preliminary evaluation of the data from pilot testing done in the spring of 2013 indicates that Canisius students are at the national average with respect to the overall results of the iSkills test, although they are well above the national average in the evaluation of materials. However, they fell below the average for accessing and managing data. The primary purpose of this testing was to establish a base line of what entering freshmen and graduating seniors had mastered in the way of information literacy skills for purpose of comparison with subsequent student cohorts.

In the course of developing and implementing a plan for the assessment of student learning in the core curriculum, it became evident that the lines of responsibility between the Faculty Senate, Core Curriculum Committee, and Education Policy Committee had not been clearly defined. To remedy this situation, the Co-Directors of the Core Curriculum met with Michael Noonan, chair of the Faculty Senate, and Rebecca Krawiec, chair of the Educational Policy Committee, to draft the general outlines of a resolution that was subsequently approved by the Faculty Senate at its meeting on December 6, 2013. The text of that resolution reads:

In order to resolve ambiguities in various core documents relating to the relationship between the Faculty Senate, Educational Policy Committee, and the Core Curriculum Committee and the respective responsibilities of these three bodies, the Faculty Senate recommends the following procedure for disposing of business related to its responsibilities as trustee of the Canisius College Core Curriculum.

All action items related to the Core Curriculum fall into one of three categories.

- 1) Action items that require Senate and EPC approval: This category includes all items that pertain to the interpretation of the language of the Core Curriculum and to the assessment of the student learning in the Core Curriculum. Specifically included in this category are the Goals and Objectives for the different components of the Core Curriculum and policies and procedures related to Core assessment. These items will be sent by the CCC to the chair of the Senate, who will automatically refer them to the chair of the EPC without waiting for the next meeting of the Faculty Senate to do this. The chair of the EPC will then call a meeting of the EPC and report back to the Senate on these items at the earliest possible opportunity.
- 2) Action items that benefit from EPC review but do not require Senate approval: This category includes all items on which the CCC requests input from the EPC but do not materially affect the way in which the language the Core Curriculum is interpreted or pertain to the policies and procedures of Core assessment. An example of such items would be the statements that the CCC has posted on the Core website on Information Literacy and Writing in the Core Curriculum.
- 3) Action items that remain within the purview of the CCC: This category includes items like the approval and decertification of courses for Core credit, the developments of the templates for the approval of courses for the Core Curriculum, and statements about the status and progress of the Core.
- 4) In the event that there are differences between the CCC and EPC that cannot be resolved through negotiation, these will be referred to the Faculty Senate for its adjudication.

In the event of inconsistencies and/or contradictions between this document and other documents that pertain to the Core Curriculum, this document supersedes the “Resolution on the Core Curriculum Committee” of March 2009 and the “Strategic Plan for the Assessment of Student Learning in the Core Curriculum” of October 2012 but not those provisions of the Senate Constitution that pertain to the Core Curriculum, the Core Curriculum Committee, or the Educational Policy Committee of the Faculty Senate.

Lastly, on January 30, 2014, Christine Ryan asked the Core Curriculum Committee to consider a proposal for the award of credit for the Diversity and Global Awareness attributes to students who had received scores of 4 or 5 on Advanced Placement tests in high school for American History, European History, World History, Comparative Politics, and Art History (as well as for a small number of students who had taken comparable courses in satisfying the requirements for the International Baccalaureate) on January 30, 2014, then briefly revisited the issue on April 10, 2014, and adopted the following resolution on April 24, 2014:

After a careful review and discussion of the administration’s recommendation that students who had received grades of 4 or 5 on Advanced Placement tests for American History, European History, World History, Comparative Politics, and Art History or who have taken comparable courses for the International Baccalaureate may use those courses to satisfy requirements in the Canisius College Core Curriculum for the Diversity and Global Awareness attributes, the Core Curriculum Committee has determined that the adoption of this recommendation would

severely compromise the integrity of the Core Curriculum and that it therefore should not be approved.

In arriving at this decision, the Core Curriculum Committee strived to balance the practical advantages to be gained by accepting the administration's proposal against the need to preserve the academic integrity of the Core Curriculum. The Core Curriculum Committee did not accept the administration's argument that, since transfer students were permitted to use comparable courses they had taken at other academic institutions to satisfy the Diversity and Global Awareness attributes, freshmen who had received scores of 4 or 5 on AP exams or who had taken comparable courses as part of an International Baccalaureate should also be permitted to do so. A fuller statement of the Core Curriculum Committee's reasons for not approving the administration's request for the award of attribute credit in Diversity and Global Awareness to students who have received scores of 4 or 5 on Advanced Placement tests in high school for American History, European History, World History, Comparative Politics, and Art History or for comparable courses that students may have taken in satisfying the requirements for the International Baccalaureate is to be found in a memorandum to Blair Foster, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar, from April 21, 2014, that will be posted on the Core Curriculum website. The question has been referred to the Faculty Senate and Educational Policy Committee for their attention.

This has been a busy year for the Core Curriculum. Between August 2013 and the end of April 2014, the Core Curriculum Committee met no less than twelve times and approved twenty-five courses and two Core Capstone courses for inclusion in the Core Curriculum. Working with David Courtney, the College's Director of Web Services, the Co-Directors of the Core Curriculum were able to eliminate most of the problems that had plagued the Core Curriculum website last year and to bring the website up to date so that it accurately reflects current core policy. Among the new documents posted on the website was one entitled "Writing in the Core Curriculum" that had been first drafted in 2008 but was revised to reflect current policy in FYS 101, ENG 101, and the Advanced Writing Intensive attribute. The Co-Directors also worked with Margaret McCarthy, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, to ensure that the Goals and Objectives of the Canisius College Core Curriculum were aligned with institutional learning goals.

None of this would have been possible without the strong support and hard work of the Core Curriculum Committee. As Co-Directors of the Core Curriculum, we would like to express our deep appreciation to all of those on the Core Curriculum Committee whose contributions to its work are ultimately responsible for all we have been able to accomplish, by name Richard Bailey, Barbara Burns, Betsy DelleBovi, Patricia Erickson, Julie Henry, James Huard, Tanya Loughhead, Mark Meyer, Philip Pfaff, and Ann Wright as the seven voting faculty members or their appointed representatives, as well as to Lauren Cavanaugh, Edward Garrity, and Debra Instone-Noonan as the deans' representatives on the Core Curriculum Committee, Thomas Reber as the Director of Freshman Writing, Kris Kasbohm and Kelly Lambert as representatives of the library and specialists on information literacy, and Rebecca Krawiec, chair of the Educational Policy Committee of the Faculty Senate. Our special thanks also goes out to those members of the Canisius College faculty who agreed to serve on the various committees entrusted with the responsibility of drafting of the Goals and Objectives for the different components of the Core Curriculum from which the Core Curriculum Committee would work in completing this aspect of core assessment. We would also like to express our appreciation to Michael Noonan and the

Faculty Senate for their strong and active support throughout the past year, to Debra Instone-Noonan and Patricia Coward for their help and counsel in the area of core assessment, and to Rick Wall for his consistent support as Vice President for Academic Affairs, and last but not least to Mark Meyer for his willingness to accept the position of Associate Director of the Core Curriculum for the forthcoming year and Jennifer Desiderio for her willingness to assume the responsibilities of the Director of Freshman Writing.

Respectfully submitted,

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Co-Directors of the Canisius College Core Curriculum

April 28, 2014