UNIVERSITY of ARKANSAS

Dale Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences
Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station
Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness

217 Agriculture Building • Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701 • (501) 575-2256 • (501) 575-5306 (FAX)

February 8, 2002

To: Faculty Senate Agenda Committee

From: Martin Redfern, Chair, Undergraduate Programs Committee

At the request of Dr. Nancy Talburt, the committee examined the "Rationale for University of Arkansas General Education Core" document(attached).

The Undergraduate Programs Committee concurs with the content of the "Rationale for University of Arkansas General Education Core" document, and recommends approval by the Faculty Senate.

Memorandum

FROM: General Education Core Curriculum Committee
Janet Renwick, Chair

TO: Undergraduate Programs Committee
Martin Redfern, Chair

DATE: November 28, 2001

SUBJECT: Rationale for University undergraduate core curriculum

The General Education Core Curriculum Committee (GECCC) submits for your consideration the attached rationale for including courses in the university core curriculum.

The GECCC is made up of the following members, appointed by the Chair of the Faculty Senate for three year terms.

Donald Roufa	Biological Sciences	1999-2002
Janet Renwick (chair)	Information Systems	1999-2002
Elizabeth McKee	Library	1999-2002
Marjorie Fitch-Hilgenburg	Human Environmental Sciences	2000-2003
Gay Stewart	Physics	2000-2003
Lynne Webb	Communication	2000-2003
Matt Gordon	Mechanical Engineering	2000-2003
Kim Sexton	Architecture	2001-2004
Fred Spiegel	Biological Sciences	2001-2004
Betsy Orr	Vocational & Adult Education	2001-2004
Mark Cory	Foreign Languages	2001-2004

RATIONALE FOR UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS GENERAL EDUCATION CORE

In order to prepare its students for lives of the highest individual quality and the greatest potential contribution to the making of a better world, the University of Arkansas has developed a comprehensive program of general education. Although the basic skills, knowledge, methodologies, and judgements derived from experience in the core area set forth here may provide the basis for a major or professional concentration, the aims of these core requirements are not career specific. Rather, the following areas are designed to develop the tools for critical thinking and effective communication, an understanding of our richly diverse human heritage, the flexibility to adapt successfully to a rapidly changing world, a capacity for lifelong learning, and an enthusiasm for creativity.

The General Education Core curriculum for the University of Arkansas can be found on pages 41-42 of the 2001-2002 Catalog of Studies or at http://pigtrail.uark.edu/catalogofstudies/01-02/intro/AcademRegs.html.

English/Communication (six hours)
Courses offered in this area are designed to develop the ability to organize ideas and to communicate them in grammatically correct written English with clarity, precision, and syntactical maturity.

Fine Arts/Humanities (six hours)
Courses presented in this area are drawn from the study of human thought, emotion, values, culture, and aesthetics. They are designed to develop the capacity for reflection, an appreciation of our own diverse culture and a tolerance of those foreign to us, and a heightened aesthetic and ethical sensibility. The courses are not performance-based, but offer students a basis for the gradual acquisition of broad cultural literacy.

Mathematics (three hours)
Courses offered in this area are designed to develop the student's ability to understand the diverse mathematical concepts that shape our increasingly technical culture. Core mathematics courses presuppose the ability to apply mathematical techniques at the level of high school algebra and geometry. The specific course(s) selected will depend upon each student's curriculum, but no course below college algebra may be used to fulfill core requirements.

Science (eight hours)
A primary goal of these courses is to develop an appreciation of the basic principles that govern natural phenomena and the role of experiment and observation in revealing these principles. Students should acquire an understanding of the relationship between hypothesis, experiment, and theory, and develop the skills common to scientific inquiry, including the ability to frame hypotheses and defend conclusions based on the analysis of data. These courses are designed to prepare a student for informed citizenship by illustrating the importance of science and technology to the present and future quality of life and the ethical questions raised by scientific and technological advances.

Social Science (twelve hours)
The social sciences acquire and transmit knowledge with a distinctive set of methodologies. Courses offered in these methodologies are designed to equip students with an understanding of the causes and consequences of actions taken by individuals as well as by groups and institutions. Because of the compelling need for all educated citizens to have a basic familiarity with the social and political institutions and traditions of our own country, at least one of the courses selected (3 hours of the 12) must be from those marked with an asterisk (*).

Criteria for a Core Curriculum English/Communication Course

The four criteria should be met by **all** core English courses:

- They should be basic college-level composition courses without specific prerequisites.
- They should emphasize the fundamentals of Standard English, including sentence structure and the mechanics of verb forms, punctuation, capitalization, possessives, and plural forms.
- They should develop the ability to organize, select and relate ideas and to outline and develop these ideas in coherent paragraphs.
- They should develop the ability to gather information from primary and secondary sources, to quote, paraphrase and summarize accurately and without plagiarism, and to cite sources properly.

One or more of the following criteria should be explicitly addressed in each course syllabus:

- The ability to develop writing styles, including vocabulary and sentence structure, for different audiences and purposes.
- The ability to improve one's own writing by revising, correcting errors and restructuring.
- The recognition that writing is a process involving collecting information, formulating ideas, drafting, arranging paragraphs in an appropriate order, structuring transitions to make the relationships between paragraphs and ideas clear, and revising for accuracy and clarity.
- The joy of skilled, confident writing as a way of discovering and clarifying ideas.

Criteria for Core Curriculum Fine Arts/Humanities Course

The four criteria below should be met by **all** core fine arts/humanities courses:

- They should be a basic survey of a broad and fundamental area, not applied and narrow in scope. The material should serve as the foundation for further study in both the primary area and other disciplines.
- They should be rooted in disciplines recognized by the National Endowment for the Humanities, e.g., History and Criticism of Arts (Music, Art, Drama, Architecture) History, Archeology, Literature, Philosophy, Comparative Religion.
- They should address values and esthetics and the ways these are formed and challenged by cultures over time, without privileging any one value system at the expense of or to the degradation of other competing value systems.
- They should build a context for continual learning, such that subsequent courses in the humanities and fine arts, as well as individual exploration of texts, ideas and the arts will profit from and be informed by a common cultural literacy.

One or more of the following criteria should be explicitly addressed in each course syllabus:

- The relevance of the recording, reevaluation and understanding of the past to contemporary issues of individual behavior and social interaction.
- An appreciation of the diverse expressions of our common humanity.
- The process and meaning of change, including the challenges mounted by an increasing reliance upon technology.
- The responsibility of the individual to live an examined life.

Criteria for a Core Curriculum Mathematics Course

The four criteria below should be met by **all** core mathematics courses:

- They should be basic college-level mathematics courses in algebra, calculus and finite mathematics.
- They should develop the ability to formulate and solve a problem in mathematical terms.
- They should develop the ability to select and use appropriate approaches and tools in solving problems (mental computation, trial and error, paper-and-pencil techniques, calculator, and computer).
- They should develop the ability to perform, with reasonable accuracy, the computations of integers, fractions, decimals, ratios, proportions, percentages, roots and powers.

One or more of the following criteria should be explicitly addressed in each course syllabus:

- The ability to make estimates and approximations, and to judge the reasonableness of a result.
- The ability to use concepts of probability and statistics.
- Familiarity with the language, notation, and deductive nature of mathematics and the ability to express quantitative ideas with precision.
- The ability to apply mathematical techniques in the solution of real-life problems in our increasingly technical culture.

Criteria for a Core Curriculum Science Course

The four criteria below should be met by **all** core science courses:

- They should be a basic survey of a broad and fundamental area, not applied and narrow in scope. The material should serve as the foundation for further study in both the primary area and other disciplines.
- The empirical nature of science and the primary role of observation should form the basis for them. The responsibility of a scientist to scrutinize experimental results for precision and repeatability and to rigorously test theory against observation should be emphasized.
- A hands on laboratory experience should be included.
- Experience in problem solving and the development of problem solving skills should form a part of all of them.

One or more of the following criteria should be explicitly addressed in the course syllabus:

- The importance of science and technology to present and future quality of life should be presented. Examples should include applications to current technology and a recognition of unresolved problems.
- The increasing overlap of scientific disciplines and growth of the role of multidisciplinary team research should be made clear.
- Incorporation of an historical perspective of the role of science to the development of society is desirable.
- Where appropriate, attention may be devoted to ethical questions raised by scientific and technological advances.

Criteria for a Core Curriculum Social Science Course

The four criteria below should be met by **all** core social science courses:

- They should be a basic survey of a broad and fundamental area, not applied and narrow in scope. The material should serve as the foundation for further study in both the primary area and other disciplines.
- They should introduce students to the methodologies of the social sciences, including the applications of data to the understanding of human behaviors.
- They should explore the causes and consequences of actions taken by individuals as well as by groups and institutions, and relate these to our contemporary situation.
- Those marked with an asterisk should offer a basic familiarity with the social and political institutions and traditions of the United States of America.

One or more of the following criteria should be explicitly addressed in each course syllabus:

- The multi-disciplinary nature of social scientific inquiry.
- The increasing inter-connectedness of today's world.
- The challenges mounted by an increasing reliance upon technology.
- The contributions of the social sciences to ethically more responsible societies.