

State of the Core Report
July 2017
Office of the Associate Dean for the Core
Boston College

For Distribution

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I. Executive Summary

This is the second annual State of the Core Report generated by the Office of the Associate Dean for the Core on behalf of the University Core Renewal Committee (UCRC), both created in 2015. This report focuses on (1) the activities of the Office of the Associate Dean and the UCRC, and (2) student experiences of new interdisciplinary Core courses—Complex Problems and Enduring Questions—offered in 2015–2016 and 2016–2017. We are extremely grateful to the Office of Institutional Research, Planning, & Assessment (IRPA) and to Student Services for having generated valuable data on the Core. General conclusions include:

- The Office of the Associate Dean for the Core and the UCRC
 - In the two years since its inception the Core Office has made great strides in bringing order and coherence to the Core as a whole while implementing new interdisciplinary and Mission-integrative courses for first-year students.
 - The Office has established working relationships with many units across the university—the energy and dynamism of Core Renewal furthering collaboration and community at Boston College in general.
 - While further staff support is coming into focus, the demands on the office remain great.
 - The UCRC is beginning to encounter efforts revitalize the Core beyond the pilot courses; such initiatives are emerging organically from departments, faculty, and staff.
 - A new Difference, Justice, and the Common Good initiative seeks to enliven the Cultural Diversity requirement.
- Core Renewal Pilot Courses
 - During their first two years, Complex Problems and Enduring Questions classes have been largely successful in achieving their goals.
 - Semester-by-semester data collection enables direct adaptation and ongoing revision. Areas for improvement include: increasing the involvement of Philosophy and Theology faculty, deepening curricular linkages with the Career Center, and bringing greater intentionality to course integration.
 - The Core Office supported 2016–2017 pilot courses while preparing for 2017–2018 courses. The number of courses has grown dramatically (AY16: 3 Complex Problems and 6 Enduring Questions pairs; AY18: 6 Complex Problems and 22 Enduring Questions pairs).
- Recommendations
 - Core Renewal sustainability will require senior leadership decisions about program continuity. Since the Complex Problems and Enduring Questions program is still being developed, budget regularization will require continued flexibility in coming years. Core Office support should be expanded to keep pace with growing demands and initiatives. Another three-to-five year phase of revitalization—Core Renewal 2.0—should be authorized.

For further information visit the Core website: www.bc.edu/core.

II. The Office of the Associate Dean of the Core and the University Core Renewal Committee

The Office of the Associate Dean for the Core, in conjunction with the University Core Renewal Committee and its subcommittees, is responsible for overseeing and revitalizing the Boston College Core Curriculum. The Office has existed since the summer of 2015 when the position of the Associate Dean for the Core was created. A second position, the Assistant Director of the Core, has been in place since March 2016. The University Core Renewal Committee is composed of sixteen faculty, administrators, and a student representative. It has three regular subcommittees: Renewal, Assessment, and Curriculum. Core management involves responding to student, faculty, and administrative requests across the university—from students seeking advising and substitution credit to university strategic planning and advancement. Mary Crane, Thomas F. Rattigan Professor, English Department, and Director, Institute for the Liberal Arts, and especially Charles Keenan, Assistant Director of the Core, are to be deeply thanked for their tremendous efforts in making the process of Core renewal move forward.

A few major activities of the Core Office in 2016–2017 included:

- Facilitating the second year of Core Renewal Pilot Courses and planning for a third year in 2017–2018 (a full account is below in section III. Core Renewal).
- Developing a newly refurbished “maker space” (Carney 302) for use in Complex Problems labs.
- Hiring six Visiting Assistant Professors as Core Fellows (three national searches, three BC Ph.D.s). Fellows will teach Complex Problems labs, an Enduring Questions class, and an elective during the 2017–2018 academic year.
- Conducting a four-day retreat in New Castle, New Hampshire for ten Core Renewal Pilot faculty. Faculty discussed the Core, liberal arts, and the BC Mission for one and a half days and then worked on their own research and writing projects.
- Launching a new Difference, Justice, and the Common Good initiative (reviewed faculty applications, led four workshops for twenty faculty in spring 2017, scheduled and promoted eighteen new Cultural Diversity courses to be taught in AY18).
- Reviewing 236 individual student requests for Cultural Diversity substitution credit (156 approved, 64 denied, 6 no decision, 9 withdrawn, 1 no action).

(A)The Core Office

The Associate Dean for the Core, the Assistant Director of the Core, and a part-time graduate assistant were responsible for Core planning and assessment, curriculum management, and administration and communication. The original rationale for the creation of this office in 2015—implementing Core Renewal pilot classes—only partially describes day-to-day functions. Many of the following tasks fall on the desk of the Assistant Director of the Core. The Associate Dean for the Core spends a large amount of time on activities that relate the Core to other aspects of the university. Core Renewal pilot courses involve faculty matchmaking, Town Halls and receptions, course creation and scheduling, organizing pedagogical workshops, marketing and promotion, advising and registration, and procurement and logistics for co-curricular programming. The Core Office played a key role in preparation for NEASC accreditation and the overlapping strategic planning process; renewal is one of the signature initiatives at the university. E-1-A forms were collected from all departments that contribute to the Core and analyzed for their progress in implementing assessment processes. The office worked with

Student Services to generate new data on student experience of all Core classes via course evaluations (particular departments requested additional questions about disciplinary-based Core classes). Collaboration with IRPA generated data on student experience of Core Renewal classes (see Addenda V.B.).

The Core Office manages the Core Curriculum as a whole. Indeed, students enrolled in pilot courses represent a small percentage of the student body. Most fulfill Core requirements through existing Core classes and programs. The Assistant Director processes faculty applications for courses to be considered for Core credit by the Curriculum Subcommittee, and communicates decisions to departments and Student Services. He furthermore is charged with reconciling course management, catalog, registration, and enrollment issues related to Core classes. In AY17 he helped build the new degree audit system for the Core. He is also the primary point of contact for all student inquiries about the Core (transfer, study abroad, Woods, summer courses, UIS/Course Information discrepancies, degree audits). It should be underscored that many responsibilities previously overseen by Student Services are now performed by the Core Office (workflow that was not foreseen in the original conception of this office). Departments continue to handle substitution requests from students, with the exception of Cultural Diversity requests, which the Assistant Director processes. He also researches how changes in Core requirements might affect enrollments.

Finally, the Core Office fulfills the myriad administrative and communication tasks associated with Core Renewal and the Core as a whole. Again, the Assistant Director has held principal responsibility for co-curricular procurements and logistics, reimbursements, scheduling and enrollment management for the pilot courses. He also maintains the Core e-mail account and website, schedules meetings and reserves rooms, handles catering, print orders, communication (flyer, HTML e-mail, brochure design), travel arrangements, supplies, technology requests, invitations, scheduling and room keys for Carney 302, etc. Fortunately, as of August 2017, further administrative support in MCAS is coming into focus.

Campus-Wide Collaborations

The Associate Dean and Assistant Director together liaise with other university units, dividing strategic and operational tasks between them. Among the individuals and groups with whom the Associate Dean and/or the Assistant Director met in 2016–2017 academic year were:

- Academic Officers Council
- Academic Advising Center
- Admissions (student tour guides & Admitted Eagle Days)
- Assessment Report Development Committee
- Brian Braman, Director, Perspectives
- Board of Trustees (full board & Academic Subcommittee)
- David Cave, Advancement (fundraising calls with parents and alumni, trip to New York)
- Center for Teaching Excellence
- Communications Department
- History Department
- Honors Program
- Information Technology Services retreat
- Institute for Integrated Science and Society planning group
- Institutional Research, Planning and Assessment (research unit, space planning unit)

MCAS Dean, Greg Kalscheur, S.J.
 Richard Keeley and Monetta Edwards, Winston Center for Leadership and Ethics
 Father President William P. Leahy, S.J.
 Mathematics Department
 Robert M. Mauro, Global Leadership Institute
 MCAS Associate Deans
 MCAS Education Policy Committee
 MCAS Board of Chairs
 Neil McCullagh, Joseph E. Corcoran Center for Real Estate and Urban Action
 Merrimack University
 Fr. James Miracky, Provincial's Assistant for Higher Education, New York Province,
 Society of Jesus
 National Labor Relations Board
 NEASC Visiting Committee
 Office of International Programs
 Office of Marketing Communications
 Dan Ponsetto, Volunteer and Service Learning Center
 Psychology Department
 Provost David Quigley
 Law School Dean Vince Rougeau
 Mike Sacco, First Year Experience
 School of Social Work
 Senior Leadership Retreat
 Sociology Department
 Student Formation
 Student focus groups (discussed enrollment patterns and pilot course titles)
 Student Services
 Meghan Sweeney, Pulse
 Woods School
 James Weiss, Crosscurrents
 LSOE Dean Stanton Wortham

Overall Highlights

- Admissions

Met with student tour guides to provide accurate information about the Core and Core Renewal. Presented at Admitted Eagle Days. Reviewed student essay questions from Class of 2021 in which they discuss ideas for classes on complex problems and enduring questions; these topics will be added to a faculty match-matching Wiki. Admissions continues its roll in assigning Core credit for new and transfer students based on AP, IB, etc. and college-level coursework.

- Advancement

The Associate Dean spoke to the Admissions' staff *Coffee with a Prof* meeting, led a Parents' Leadership Council Conference Call, and participated in a fundraising trip to New York City.

- Assessment

In May 2016 collected E-1-A forms on the Core from all Departments. Wrote sections on the Core for BC's NEASC self-study. Given staffing constraints, no concerted effort to collect E-1-A's in May 2017 was undertaken. Core Pilot Assessment drew on course evaluations and unique surveys created by IRPA. Undertook planning for direct assessment of sample student work from 2017–2018 pilot courses.

- Budget

In October 2016, the Core Office submitted its first budget. All initiatives have been adequately funded to date, however, operationally there remains some confusion on available resources. *AY17 and projected AY18 expenditures are included in a special addendum.*

- Core Faculty Retreat 2017

At the request of the President and Provost, a first Core Renewal retreat was held in New Castle, New Hampshire in May 2017. Ten faculty participated. During a first evening and the next morning, Dean Kalscheur, Dean Bourg, and Professor Crane led colleagues in conversation and reflection on the experience of Core Renewal and on the meaning of liberal arts education at Boston College. For the next three and one-half days, faculty were invited to work on their own writing and research (a model borrowed from Mission and Ministry's Villa retreat).

- Departments

Resetting departments' relationships to the Core is a priority. The Associate Dean and Assistant Director attended faculty meetings of the Communications, Mathematics, Psychology, Political Science, and Sociology Departments and also met with School of Social Work faculty. (*Further meetings with other departments are planned for September 2017.*) There remains considerable misperception about the process of Core Renewal, and listening to concerns and answering questions productively furthers the quality of community we want on campus. Curricular coordination beyond departments is new, and faculty are adjusting. A major responsibility of the Core Office, perhaps underestimated in the initial vision that established it, is to regularize and make the Core consistent across the university. There is considerable inconsistency and uncertainty across the university with respect to the Core (e.g., which courses count for Core? how do Core classes fit into major/minor requirements? who decides if a study abroad course counts for Core?). Such inconsistency is understandable; before 2015 there had been a lack of comprehensive administrative oversight of the Core. Forward movement will require the UCRC to confront jurisdictional issues: which decisions are appropriate at the department level and which ones need to take place above a departmental level?

- Core Fellows/Visiting Assistant Professors

In winter 2017, approval was given to hire six Core Fellows/Visiting Assistant Professors to teach Complex Problems labs, an Enduring Questions class, and an elective during the 2017–2018 academic year. The number and disciplines of the Fellows was determined by the profile of the AY18 Complex Problems courses: Environmental Studies, History (2), Political Science, Science and Technology Studies, and Sociology. Three Fellows were “internal” hires (BC Ph.D.s in History, Political Science, and Sociology), and three were national searches (Environmental Studies, History, and Science and Technology Studies). Although there was a short, one-month

turnaround between advertisement and application closing date, we received 37 applications in Environmental Studies, 82 in History, and 32 in Science and Technology Studies. Core Fellows will participate in a one-day pedagogical training in August 2017 to introduce them to BC Jesuit Mission and to the Core Renewal program. One innovative aspect of this initiative is pairing postdoctoral fellows with one another to teach Enduring Questions courses. *The number and disciplines of Core Fellows needed for AY19 will be determined in October 2017 once AY19 CP courses are selected.*

- Student Services

Another unanticipated growth in the responsibilities of the Core Office involves taking over tasks previously performed by Student Services (degree audits, enrollment management, last minute additions of Core seats and sections based on registration). Student Services and departments are newly turning to the Core Office for decisions and planning. The Assistant Director spent several weeks helping build the new degree audit system for Core requirements. He also prepares materials for the Advising Center.

- Additional Relations

There is an on-going need to interact with the Office for International Programs, the Woods School of Advancing Studies, and the professional schools (e.g., Education, Law, Management, Nursing, and Social Work). The Core Office has not had the capacity to adequately pursue such coordination.

(B)The University Core Renewal Committee

The UCRC met six times during the 2016–2017 academic year (see meeting minutes at Addendum V.F).

The Renewal Subcommittee is responsible for Complex Problems and Enduring Questions pilot courses. It initially vets faculty applications before making recommendations to the UCRC as a whole. The Subcommittee also strategizes ways to continue to expand faculty participation and student enrollment. In AY17, the Assessment Subcommittee examined E-1-A forms and the BC self-study in preparation for the spring 2017 NEASC accreditation visit. The Curriculum Subcommittee is responsible for reviewing new course applications for Core credit. Faculty can apply four times a year for their courses to receive Core credit. In 2016–2017, this Subcommittee reviewed 26 applications (14 were approved: 3 Arts, 4 Cultural Diversity, 2 History, 3 Literature, 1 Mathematics, 2 Social Science). Others were asked to revise and resubmit or were rejected. The preceding iteration of the UCRC—the University Core Development Committee (1991–2015)—focused entirely on the single task now performed by this one UCRC subcommittee. The Associate Dean for the Core chairs and Assistant Director of the Core attends all meetings.

In its second year, the UCRC began to encounter broader issues of Core governance and renewal beyond the pilot courses. As noted above, between 1991 and 2015, there had been no central administrative oversight to the Core. Departments staffed courses and students took them. Course availability to meet student demand developed more or less organically. So too, some departments have tended to “own” certain Core requirements; the departments of History, Philosophy, Theology, and Mathematics have almost exclusively serviced those Core classes. English staffs Writing and almost all Literature Core classes. Other requirements tend to be “shared” among departments: for instance, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Arts, and Cultural

Diversity. In AY2017, the UCRC began to encounter a pattern of requests from departments seeking to revitalize their contributions to the Core. *Core Renewal exceeds the pilot courses*. The issue is both commonsensical (why should the Core continue to function as its developed over time without any deliberate university-wide planning?) and potentially fraught (departmental identities and perhaps even funding may be tied to student credit hours associated with Core teaching). In considering more general renewal of the Core Curriculum, the UCRC came to reflect on its own new role; in other words, what are the processes by which general changes to the Core might transpire? Consultation with the Dean of MCAS and the Provost led to the following determination in May 2017: as stated in its establishing charter, the UCRC is charged with considering proposals for alterations to the Core; such proposals will be submitted to the Provost as recommendations; the Provost will make decisions that will be implemented by the Office of the Associate Dean for the Core.

Examples of proposals to renew the Core beyond pilot courses:

- Computer Science, which has not historically contributed to the Core, proposed an alteration to the Mathematics requirement, recasting it as Data Science and Quantitative Reasoning.
- The Cultural Diversity requirement is being considered for restructuring as a Difference, Justice, and the Common Good (DJCG) requirement (see pp. 16–17 below).
- The Classics Department proposed two courses to count for History Core, which the Curriculum Subcommittee approved.
- The Curriculum Subcommittee also gave provisional approval to a History Department experiment: intensive History Topics Core classes that introduce students to historical methods and historiographical debates.
- Inspired by faculty participation in Enduring Questions courses, the English Department is pursuing pedagogical changes to the Literature Core.
- The Director of Perspectives, Brian Braman, met with the Core Office to discuss the future sustainability of the program.
- International Studies met with the Core Office to plan a sophomore-level class for majors modeled on the Complex Problems course design.

Moving forward, more regularized processes for the submission and consideration of major changes to the Core should be developed. There is not yet sufficient bandwidth within the Core Office to pursue the kind of data analytics necessary to make evidence-based decisions on curricular changes (What are other institutions doing? What impact on enrollment will reforms have?). One can distinguish between major changes—the Computer Science and DJCG proposals—and minor alterations—specific courses can be considered by the Curriculum Subcommittee; the Dean of MCAS has folded the proposals from English, Perspectives, and IS within broader administrative requests. One can imagine other major reconsiderations in coming years: Should BC limit the number of Core courses taken outside BC (AP, study abroad, non-Woods summer courses, etc.)? How might the Institute for Integrated Science and Society affect the Core? In AY18, the Associate Dean is creating Task Forces to examine the Data Analysis/Quantitative Reasoning and DJCG possibilities; these committees will involve UCRC members as well as relevant appointed faculty. The Associate Dean and Assistant Director are also meeting with several departments in September 2017 to further open lines of communication about renewal.

(C)Difference, Justice, and the Common Good

Another new Core Renewal initiative began in AY17. Building on faculty-generated ideas, the Provost and Dean of MCAS approved seed funding for the creation of Cultural Diversity courses grouped under the title Difference, Justice, and the Common Good. The initiative attempts to bring greater coherence and intellectual rigor to an otherwise muddled Core requirement, and to align it more intentionally with the university's Mission. As the only Core classes that can "double dip" with other Core, major, minor, and elective requirements, and because they are not managed by any single department or cluster of departments, Cultural Diversity courses have over time drifted and become disordered.

Faculty were invited to join a first cohort to meet in the spring 2017 semester to discuss how new and revised courses meaningfully relate to the themes of Difference, Justice, and the Common Good. All of these courses pertain to the United States. The call for proposals read in part:

Common learning goals for these classes include the following:

- 1) Students will understand and be able to explain how power shapes differences and creates injustices in the United States. In the context of the university's Jesuit, Catholic mission, and as appropriate in the particular course, students encounter and engage the reality of a broken world that calls out for God's justice, love, and mercy.
- 2) Students will develop skills to think more critically about how difference and power have operated both in the past and present. Such skills may include intercultural competence, listening to diverse others, reflection on one's own experiences and identity, integrating the theoretical and empirical study of difference and power, and connecting academic knowledge to lived experience. These abilities deepen our experience of being part of the diverse but united human family.
- 3) Students will understand the relationship between justice and the common good and imagine how to act constructively in dialogue with people who are marginalized and dispossessed in the pursuit of justice and the common good.

Twenty faculty from nine different departments were selected to participate in four pedagogical workshops during the spring 2017 semester. These were difficult conversations: faculty perspectives varied widely according to discipline and political inclination. Yet the search for common vocabulary and shared aspirations to reach students created some forward movement. Faculty received stipends of \$3500 to participate in these sessions and their proposed AY18 courses were assigned Cultural Diversity credit and promoted together to academic advisers. See Addendum V.A.2 for course listings. *The next step in this initiative remains to be decided.*

III. Core Renewal

2016–2017 was the second academic year of a three-year pilot phase of Core Renewal classes. There are two types of courses: Complex Problems and Enduring Questions (<http://www.bc.edu/sites/core/core-renewal>). See Addendum V.A.1 for course listings. The Core Office managed AY17 courses and planned for AY18 courses. Management of 2016–2017 courses involved promotion, registration, procurements, reimbursements, assessment via Student Services and IRPA, and responding to faculty and student requests. Planning for 2018–2019 required facilitation of faculty pairs, review of faculty applications, coordination with department chairs, revising titles and descriptions, course creation, pedagogical workshops, hiring postdoctoral fellows, marketing and promotion, co-curricular logistical planning, registration.

Enrollments

As of July 2017, enrollments for the first three years of pilot courses are:

AY15 = 326 students/341 seats (95%)

CP = 226

EQ = 100

AY16 = 535 students/743 seats (72%)

CP = 351

EQ = 184

Fall 2017 = as of Orientation 6 (July 25, 2017): 415 students/475 seats (87%)

(n.b. final numbers will be higher after Orientation 7)

CP = 268

EQ = 147

Spring 2018 = 551 seats

2016–2017 Pilot Courses

During the summer 2016 Orientation sessions, first-year registration for pilot courses fell below target numbers. In August, the decision was made to open seats in a few courses to sophomores, then juniors, and then seniors. This action contradicted prior planning and promotion, yet it was preferable to have full seats than empty ones. Anecdotal evidence of this experiment was mixed: some first-year students said they appreciated the presence of older and more experienced peers, and yet we remain concerned that the presence of too many sophomores, etc. would fundamentally alter classroom dynamics. We are still learning what topics and disciplines appeal to first-year students. For instance, two Complex Problems courses in AY17 involving faculty from Theatre did not fill. This fact fits with a lesson learned in the 2016 State of the Core Report: most students satisfy their Arts Core requirement later in their time at Boston College. Involvement of Arts faculty in Core Renewal is highly desirable, however, in the future we may not schedule more than one Theatre course or ones with large enrollments. This case exemplifies one of the advantages of Core Renewal to date: experimentation and adaptive evidence-based decision-making. Logistical elements of the pilot courses are discussed above under the Core Office heading and below on pp. 14–15.

A training for AY17 Complex Problems Teaching Assistants was held in August 2016.

Assessment

In 2016–2017 Core courses were evaluated in two ways: (1) a special survey developed

by IRPA, and (2) questions added to the normal course evaluations administered by Student Services. Thanks to continuities from AY16 to AY17, the IRPA surveys also enable aggregate data on the first two years of the pilots.

(A)2016–2017 Core Renewal Pilot Course Analysis

Student responses to survey questions remain largely “positive on nearly every measure.” See Addenda V.B.1 and V.B.2. Responses expectedly varied according to course; as always, some classes were more successful than others. A slight decline in positive survey results from AY16 to AY17 may reflect equalization that accompanies the increase in the overall number of courses and students. In their qualitative comments students highlighted area for praise and also for further development: course format and content, workload, assignments, and connections.

In demographic terms, compared to the freshmen class as a whole, relatively more women, MCAS, and students with middle-level admission rankings enrolled in pilot courses during the spring 2017 semester. Statements that scored high ratings across both semesters on a six-point agree-disagree scale were:

- [EQ ONLY] I explored enduring questions that are central to understanding human life.
- [EQ ONLY] The questions discussed were of interest to me.
- I was challenged to think in new ways.

Statements that received the lowest rankings common to both semesters were:

- I was helped to think about a future career path.
- [CP ONLY] The labs were a valuable part of the course.
- I was helped to move toward making a decision about a major in one of these fields.
- I considered the role of religious faith in approaching [EQs] OR [CPs].
- I think I would have benefited more from these courses if I had taken them later in college.

These courses are doing well in terms of fostering intellectual rigor and engagement. Even the statement that one could benefit from such a course later in college reinforces this point, since it speaks to students’ sense of workload and perceptions of their capacities (first-year student have no knowledge of who they will be in several years). Clearly, more work can be done (1) to involve the Career Center in pilot courses where appropriate, and (2) to encourage faculty to make connections between, on the one hand, course content and methods, and on the other hand, the majors to which they point. So much of the first-year experience is dedicated to adapting to college and acquiring new personal and study skills; still, we could do a better job of encouraging students to imagine their own futures as sophomores, juniors, and seniors. We are cognizant of the fact that CP labs remain in need of further development; they remain among the most challenging aspects of those courses, since faculty design semester-long projects or units that supplement and amplify without repeating lecture materials. The model of project- and problem-based learning is a good one, and faculty continue to innovate and learn. Lab logistics, as well as delineating appropriate faculty and teaching assistants roles, remain ongoing challenges.

We learned in the first pilot year that themes related to religious faith were not rating as highly on student surveys as we would prefer. In 2016–2017, one of the two new questions IRPA added to the survey addressed religion in particular: To what extent were religion and faith, as they relate to this course topic, discussed or addressed in the course? The fall 2016 mean was 2.24 on a five-point scale from “To a very great extent” to “Not at all.” In spring 2017 the mean

was 2.75. These are low scores, falling between “Somewhat” and “Very little.” Not surprisingly, courses taught by Theology faculty scored the highest, for instance, Professor Brian Robinette’s course (4.27). We can expect continued low ratings on these statements until the departments that most explicitly engage questions of religion of faith as a matter of scholarly expertise—Philosophy and Theology—increase their participation in Core Renewal courses. The presence of Philosophy and Theology faculty in the spring pedagogical workshops would have an overall positive impact on colleagues. In the workshops, efforts are made to introduce faculty to Ignatian traditions, to provide them vocabulary with which to pursue intentional reflection in their classes, and to invite them to engagement the Mission of BC. Since faculty background and engagement with these themes are diverse, outcomes are understandably mixed. It is not the responsibility of the Core Office to mandate what and how faculty teach. Colleagues need to be encouraged and cultivated, in a word, nudged toward approaches in the classroom that align with Boston College’s Mission and identity.

The second question added in AY17 concerned Reflection sessions—another innovative dimension of these courses. After the first year of pilots in 2015–2016, we wondered about the integration of Reflection sessions with the rest of the courses. We were relatively pleased by the results. To the question—To what extent was the content of your reflection section connected to the course?—the mean score on the “To a very great extent” to “Not at all” scale in fall 2016 was 3.68; in spring 2017 it was 4.02. Still, the Reflection component continues to require ongoing development and refining. Some faculty need to become more explicit about reflective practices they already pursue in the classroom; others need further introduction to the Ignatian principles of educating the whole person. Further individual course details as well as aggregate treatment by course type and demographic category are available in the full reports in the Addenda.

Students were also asked a series of open-ended questions: What was most valuable about the pilot course? Least valuable? Is there anything you would recommend changing about this Core pilot course? Responses were obviously varied, but for spring 2017 courses, IRPA was able to discern patterns. Students found the most valuable attributes of the class to be the course content (bringing two disciplines together; relevance), class dynamics (especially in the smaller labs and Enduring Questions classes), and course format (notably discussions and labs).

It is important to pay perhaps even greater attention to criticisms, since we are committed to an ongoing process of reflective renewal. Students found least valuable the workload, labs, and, perhaps curiously, some course content. Some perceived that these courses were “a lot more work” than other Core classes. Judgments of these perspectives walk a fine line: we want Core Renewal classes to be rigorous, and we want to push back against the perception that Core classes are “easier” than other courses. At the same time, it would be self-defeating if these classes developed a reputation for being dramatically more difficult or more work than other courses; students might be dissuaded from enrolling in them. As mentioned, CP labs require continuing development. Some students felt that the labs were not integrated into the rest of the class, were redundant, or involved tasks and activities whose purpose was not always clear. Criticisms of content tended to emerge around particular classes; for instance, science-oriented courses sometimes did not explain terminology, methods, and data clearly enough.

Students recommended more interactive learning and greater integration of disciplines. Less helpful ideas included getting rid of evening Reflection times, looser attendance policies, and less work. It is clear from the qualitative comments that some courses were simply more successful than others, which is normal.

(B)2015–2017 Cumulative Analysis

Data gathered by IRPA in 2015–2016 and 2016–2017 shows that course demographics have remained largely consistent over four semesters. See Addendum V.B.3. Pilot courses have received consistently high marks from students “on nearly every measure.” Of the twenty-eight questions asked students across four semesters, the highest average responses on the six-point agree-disagree scale (*1=Strongly disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Slightly disagree; 4=Slightly agree; 5=Agree; 6=Strongly agree*) were:

| | Mean 2016F | Mean 2016S | Mean 2017F | Mean 2017S | 4-term Average |
|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------|
| [EQ ONLY] I explored enduring questions that are central to understanding human life. | 5.7 | 5.6 | 5.6 | 5.3 | 5.6 |
| [EQ ONLY] The questions discussed were of interest to me. | 5.7 | 5.6 | 5.6 | 5.3 | 5.5 |
| I gained a greater understanding of a complex contemporary problem. [CP ONLY] | 5.5 | 5.5 | 4.8 | 5.0 | 5.2 |
| I learned how these two disciplines relate to each other, and differ in their approaches. | 5.4 | 5.2 | 5.0 | 5.1 | 5.2 |
| I was challenged to think in new ways. | 5.3 | 5.3 | 5.3 | 5.1 | 5.2 |

The lowest average ratings were:

| | | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| I was helped to move toward making a decision about a major in one of these fields. | 4.3 | 4.0 | 3.9 | 3.8 | 4.0 |
| I was helped to think about a future career path. | 4.2 | 3.9 | 4.0 | 3.9 | 4.0 |
| My main reason for taking these courses was to fulfill core requirements. | 3.5 | 4.0 | 3.7 | 4.3 | 3.9 |
| I considered the role of religious faith in approaching [EQs] OR contemporary problems [CPs]. | 3.8 | 4.1 | 3.5 | 4.0 | 3.8 |
| I think I would have benefited more from these courses if I had taken them later in college. | 3.0 | 3.3 | 3.1 | 3.0 | 3.1 |

The four-semester comparison of workload on a five-point “effort” scale (*1=Much less effort; 2=Less effort; 3=Same amount of effort; 4=More effort; 5=Much more effort*) is as follows:

| | Mean 2016F | Mean 2016S | Mean 2017F | Mean 2017S | 4-term Average |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Compared to other Core courses I have taken, this course required: | 3.96 | 4.11 | 3.77 | 3.99 | 3.96 |

A final category of responses worth mentioning concerns the influence of various promotion efforts on student enrollment decisions. Marketing these courses to first-year students takes a great amount of work, and the Office of University Communications has been a terrific partner of the Core Office.

| Influences on Decision to Enroll in a Pilot Course % Respondents who selected each option | | | | |
|--|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| | Fall 2015 N=171 | Spring 2016 N=82 | Fall 2016 N=168 | Fall 2015 N=171 |
| Brochure with courses descriptions | 78% | 55% | 61% | 49% |
| Website with course descriptions and general information about Core Pilot courses | 39% | 35% | 30% | 41% |
| Advising | 30% | 23% | 30% | 29% |
| Video of faculty discussing their courses | 25% | 23% | 20% | 26% |
| Orientation Leader | 23% | 7% | 20% | 9% |
| Marketing flyer at Admitted Eagle Day | 19% | 17% | 26% | 9% |
| My parents | 19% | 12% | 15% | 5% |
| Admission | 18% | 13% | 24% | 9% |
| Other students | 8% | 23% | 8% | 24% |
| Other (included: recommended by faculty member recommended by friend; topical interest; etc.) | 6% | 10% | 5% | 10% |

Over four semesters we see clear impact of the brochure, advising, and Orientation Leaders *especially during summer registration for fall classes*. We see a marked increase in the influence of peers *during fall registration for spring classes*. Influence via the website and videos is more consistent throughout the academic year.

Student Services Course Evaluations

Four questions were added to *all* Core classes, enabling a comparison between Core Renewal and non-renewal Core classes.

Spring 2017 Core Course Evaluation Add-On Questions

(5-point scale: 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = uncertain, 2 = disagree, 1 = strongly disagree)

| | Fall 2016 All Core Classes | Fall 2016 Core Pilot Courses | Spring 2017 All Core Courses | Spring 2017 Core Pilot Courses | AY17 All Core Courses | AY17 Core Pilot Courses |
|--|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | 12,981/14,909 responses | 371/455 responses | 11,299/13,000 responses | 313/373 responses | | |
| (1) After taking this course, I understand the basic concepts, methods, and/or content of the course's discipline. | 4.35 | 4.35 | 4.39 | 4.50 | 4.37 | 4.43 |
| (2) This Core course helped me think differently about other disciplines. | 4.02 | 4.39 | 4.11 | 4.42 | 4.07 | 4.41 |
| (3) This Core course helped me make connections and integrate what I have learned elsewhere. | 4.11 | 4.40 | 4.18 | 4.48 | 4.15 | 4.44 |
| (4) My main reason for taking this course was to fulfill a Core requirement. | 4.00 | 3.47 | 4.05 | 3.84 | 4.03 | 3.75 |

Core pilot courses scored desirable results on all four questions: higher averages when compared to all Core courses on the first three statements and lower averages on the last question. Complex Problems and Enduring Questions classes appear to do a slightly better job of introducing students to disciplines (one of the primary rationales of Core courses in general). They do a significantly better job in facilitating students' comparative and integrative thinking. Our inference is that collaborative interdisciplinary courses involving faculty from different fields

enables students both to grasp disciplinary distinction and thus also to engage in comparative and synthetic analysis. The fourth question addresses one of the rationales of Core Renewal: creating a cultural shift away from students treating Core classes as perfunctory “boxes to check” toward vital, foundational experience of the liberal arts in a Jesuit, Catholic context. We want students to want to take Core classes and not merely to fulfill requirements. Student engagement and enrichment increase when they are invested in their studies and not jumping through hoops.

(C)2017–2018 Pilot Courses

Course Creation and Planning

Creating faculty pairs for Core Renewal courses remains an ongoing challenge. Meaningful change takes time, effort, and incentives. The \$10,000 stipend for first-time course creation, and the 2-for-1 course credit for Complex Problems courses, are invaluable “carrots.” Still, the existence of these courses and faculty’s overall positive experiences teaching them are doing much to create a cultural shift. Preparatory matching for AY18 involved several processes and events: the Associate Dean and Assistant Director visited several departments to encourage applications (Communications, Mathematics, Psychology, Political Science, and Sociology); a Core Renewal social hour; Professor Crane continued her crucial, heroic work behind the scenes; the Provost’s office circulated campus-wide appeals. We have found that faculty who know one another beforehand form pairs quite easily and that those who arrive with fixed ideas about an existing course have the greatest difficulty in adapting to the interdisciplinary course structure.

A normalized schedule is emerging: course creation in the fall semester, and faculty development in the spring semester. Faculty submit applications in October, which are reviewed by the Core Renewal Subcommittee, which nominates courses for ratification by the entire UCRC. Several proposals were invited to revise and resubmit; others were encouraged to re-apply in fall 2017 for 2018–2019. In the pilot phase, the approach has been a “developmental” one; encouraging potential courses, so to speak, by watering the garden. Once courses are selected, the Assistant Director creates and schedules the classes in Course Management and UIS. This work has grown dramatically: AY16: 3 CPs/12 EQs, AY17: 5 CPs/22 EQs, and AY18: 6 CPs/44 EQs. Each CP course has lectures, weekly Reflection sessions, and labs; each EQ pair has lectures as well as four Reflection sessions at different times during the semester. There are no economies of scale in this process, since each new course requires its own distinctive profile (number, description, room). Even repeat courses require co-curricular activities and Reflection sessions to be scheduled anew each time they are taught. It is crucial that course creation happen quickly, since departments are simultaneously planning their own schedules for the following academic year. Core Renewal scheduling is complex since multiple departmental and faculty needs need to be balanced. Semester teaching preference is given to faculty who have real semester-long conflicts (i.e., sabbatical), and teaching time preference is given to those who have a true departmental conflict (i.e., another course they are obligated to teach by the department). (In fall 2017, the Assistant Director may consider faculty teaching time preferences but will not be able to guarantee all requests.) A further limitation is space: almost all Enduring Questions courses and Complex Problems labs take place in three rooms: Stokes South 105 and 103 (reserved for the Core by Student Services) and Carney 302, which the Core Office controls. We cannot presently map how the creation of now 48 new classes in 2017–2018 affects space needs, beyond the general campus-wide sense that space is limited. It is imperative that CP and EQ course creation continues to take place with the Core Office; asking departments to handle team-taught, multi-departmental scheduling would make already complex logistics unmanageable.

A new logistical challenge was the spring 2017 hiring of six Core Fellows/Visiting Assistant Professors. This involved writing and posting job descriptions, assembling hiring committees, reviewing applications, interviewing finalists, and making offers. Internal BC candidates were nominated by the chairs of relevant departments and were screened by the Associate Dean (who chaired all the searches), the Assistant Director, and Professor Crane. External, national search candidates were interviewed via Skype by the above persons and Complex Problems faculty for whom the VAPs would be teaching labs. Vice Provost for Research Thomas Chiles participated in the Science and Technology Studies search, and Professor Noah Snyder, director of Environmental Studies, participated in the environmental search.

Faculty Development

Core Renewal faculty gather for the first time together in December. This meeting enables participants to discuss the structure of the courses and to learn about the upcoming spring pedagogical workshops. The workshops take place between February and May. Faculty receive their \$10,000 stipends in May/June in exchange for participation in the workshops and completion of their syllabi (*we might consider paying these stipends in June/July in order to ensure that syllabi are completed by the end of the semester*). Repeat faculty neither attend workshops nor receive the stipend. Several faculty have proposed new courses with new partners and have thus far been allowed to attend workshops and receive the stipend a second time. This practice has made sense during the initial start-up phase of Core Renewal in order to encourage greater participation; however, *moving forward a “one-and-done” rule for faculty stipends should be considered (unless we are unable to secure an adequate number of faculty proposals)*.

In spring 2017 there were four workshops, two run by the Associate Dean and Professor Crane and two run by Stacy Grooters at the Center for Teaching Excellence. These workshops seemed more successful than in the previous year. Given the size of this faculty cohort three different groups were created (one for CP faculty and two mirror groups of EQ faculty). The Associate Dean and Assistant Director attended all twelve meetings of these workshops. In the first workshops, Dean Greg Kalscheur, S.J. presented on Ignatian pedagogy and Jesuit mission, the Associate Dean spoke on Reflection, and a faculty panel of Core Renewal faculty veterans discussed their experiences, lessons learned, and advice. In the second session, Professor Crane led a discussion on student engagement and the Associate Dean presented a profile of first-year students (thanks to information provided by Student Affairs). The third workshop at the Center for Teaching Excellence centered on interdisciplinarity, team-teaching, and learning goals. The fourth session addressed Reflection planning, discussion and difficult conversations, and large class/group work (CPs). Thanks to a survey created by the Assistant Director (see Addendum V.E.), we learned from participating faculty that the most valuable aspect of the workshops was the opportunity to work with their partners on course design (during a busy semester, structured time for planning the following academic year was invaluable). The least valuable aspect of the workshops was the Associate Dean’s presentation on first-year student culture. In the course of the workshops, faculty were informed that the final exam, project, or culminated experience of their courses should be available for assessment by an interdisciplinary committee of colleagues. *In January 2018, we anticipate members of the UCRC will review sample student work in light of declared learning goals in order to evaluate connections between intended learning outcomes and student performance.*

Promotion

If a first basic challenge of the Core Renewal pilots is developing faculty collaborations, the second major challenge is having students enroll in courses. Especially in light of low enrollments for some pilots during 2016–2017, the Core Office, the Office of University Communications, and First-Year Experience worked diligently during the academic year to prepare an effective communications strategy for AY18 courses. The Core Office and Professor Crane met with focus groups of first-year students in fall 2016 to discuss (1) why they had enrolled or not enrolled in pilot courses, (2) what they thought of AY18 pilot titles. We continue to learn why first-students take the classes that they do, what interests them, and how they think about course titles and descriptions. One lesson is that *what faculty think of as engaging course titles and descriptions may not always register for eighteen-year-olds*. It is an obvious point, but faculty are generally not accustomed to promoting their courses to students. In addition to creating a new general-purpose video on Core Renewal, the Office of University Communications again produced videos of faculty pairs (fall 2017 only), a brochure designed to send to all new first-year students and their families, and “cheat sheets” for faculty advisers. University Communications also developed a more deliberate social media campaign around these courses. The Core Office presented on AY18 courses at the three Admitted Eagle Days in spring 2017. These sessions were standing-room only and required overflow seating. As in the summer of 2015, a letter from Dean Kalscheur was sent to all MCAS students in May 2017. In 2016 this letter had not been sent until August. In 2017 letters were also gathered from the deans of CSOM, CSON, and Lynch and mailed to first-year students. Together with the Advising Center, the new director of First-Year Experience, Mike Sacco, generously made Core Renewal a priority for summer Orientation sessions. The Core Office and Professor Crane presented at the trainings for Orientation Leaders and summer academic advisors; the Associate Dean spoke each Sunday night at each Orientation session to students and parents; talking points were provided all Associate Deans for Monday morning advising sessions; and the Assistant Director of the Core attended each registration session to answer questions and manage enrollment.

IV. Analysis and Recommendations

2016–2017 was obviously a busy year for the Core Office: a near-doubling of the number of pilot courses for AY18, growth in the responsibilities of the UCRC, and the cultivation of campus-wide relationships around the Core. Where the 2016 State of the Core Report focused on drawing a map of the Core as a whole and on the first year of pilot courses, this second Report has appropriately emphasized the emerging portrait of the Core Office, the tasks required to manage pilot courses and the Core as a whole, the developing responsibilities of the UCRC, and extensions of Core Renewal beyond Complex Problems and Enduring Questions classes.

A central question to consider after two years is: What form will sustainable Core Renewal take in coming years? The initial pilot period concludes in spring 2018. While plans for AY19 courses are necessarily already underway, it is appropriate to consider a next three-to-five year horizon, Core Renewal 2.0. We should reframe the pilot courses as signature offerings alongside other unique first-year programming at Boston College: Perspectives, Courage to Know, Freshman Topics Seminars, and Pulse (mostly for sophomores but some seats reserved for freshman). How could BC present these options to prospective students, the community, and alumni as opportunities that share a common commitment to integrative, holistic, and foundational education in a Jesuit, Catholic context? This would enable BC to differentiate itself within the higher education landscape. Such coordination should be initiated by senior leadership.

Because we have thus far moved forward in the spirit of experimentation and renewal, resource allocation has been flexible and generous. It is necessary that the Core Office move toward budget regularization in coming years. The virtues of flexibility cannot be ignored; we have been able to try a number of different initiatives and continue to learn from our mistakes. Because renewal is never finished, and is indeed an ongoing process of vitalization, there may always need to be some flexibility in allocations for the Core. We continue to move toward determining how many Complex Problems and Enduring Questions classes can be offered every year.

Similarly, staffing needs of the Core stand in need of continued reevaluation. The Core touches most parts of the university, and the energy and excitement around Renewal has proved contagious. A real opportunity is at hand: maintaining momentum and energy around the Core (which radiates into other parts of the university) will require continued institutional prioritization. At the same time, no one office can do everything. There are natural limits, not only with respect to the aforementioned faculty interest and student demand but also with respect to promoting Mission integration and building community across the university. We have come some distance in a short amount of time. It is safe to say that no one could have anticipated the range and magnitude of responsibilities that would accompany the creation of such a new office. There remains much that needs to be accomplished.

In conclusion, two areas should be emphasized: (1) The pilot courses themselves seem largely to be accomplishing what they were intended to do: increasing student engagement, academic rigor, and the quality of Mission integration. Certain areas have emerged that stand in need of continuing refinement: from labs and course integration to the inclusion of faculty expertise on religion and faith. Faculty incentives for participation should continue. (2) It is likely that the UCRC will continue to encounter productive tensions between departmental autonomy and the need for administrative oversight and review. The quantitative reasoning/data analysis and Cultural Diversity topics seem the most important curricular changes to be considered.

2015–2016 Core Renewal Pilot Courses

Fall 2015

Complex Problems

Global Implications of Climate Change

Tara Pisani Gareau (EES)

Brian Gareau (Sociology)

Understanding Race, Gender, and Violence

Marilynn Johnson (History)

Shawn McGuffey (Sociology)

Enduring Questions

Truth-telling in Literature

Allison Adair (English)

Truth-telling in History

Sylvia Sellers-Garcia (History)

The Body in Sickness and Health

Jane Ashley (Nursing)

Reading the Body

Laura Tanner (English)

Humans, Nature, and Creativity

Min Song (English)

Inquiring about Humans and Nature

Holly Vandewall (Philosophy)

Spring 2016

Complex Problems

Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity

Devin Pendas (History)

Maxim Shrayar (Slavic Languages)

Enduring Questions

Power, Justice, War: The Moderns

Robert Bartlett (Political Science)

Power, Justice, War: The Ancients

Aspen Brinton (Philosophy)

Epidemics, Disease & Humanity

Kathy Dunn (Biology)

Devising Theatr: Illness as Metaphor

Scott T. Cummings (Theatre)

Spiritual Exercises: Engagement, Empathy, Ethics

Brian Robinette (Theology)

Aesthetic Exercises: Engagement, Empathy, Ethics

Daniel Callahan (Music)

2016–2017 Core Renewal Courses

* = Repeat Courses

Fall 2016

Complex Problems

Planet in Peril: The History and Future of Human Impacts on the Planet

Juliet Schor (Sociology)
Prasanna Parthasarathi (History)

Can Creativity Save the World?

Crystal Tiala (Theater)
Spencer Harrison (CSOM)

Enduring Questions

* Truth-telling in Literature

Allison Adair (English)

* Truth-telling in History

Sylvia Sellers-Garcia (History)

* Humans, Nature, and Creativity

Min Song (English)

* Inquiring about Humans and Nature

Holly Vandewall (Philosophy)

* Spiritual Exercises: Engagement, Empathy, Ethics

Brian Robinette (Theology)

* Aesthetic Exercises: Engagement, Empathy, Ethics

Daniel Callahan (Music)

Love, Gender, and Marriage:

Writing and Rewriting the Tradition
Treseanne Ainsworth (English)

Love, Gender, and Marriage:

The Western Literary Tradition
Franco Mormando (RLL)

Reading and Writing Health, Illness and Disability

Amy Boesky (English)

The Social Construction of Health and Illness

Sara Moorman (Sociology)

Spring 2017

Complex Problems

A Perfect Moral Storm:

The Science and Ethics of Climate Change
David Storey (Philosophy)
Corinne Wong (EES)

Performing Politics

Luke Jorgensen (Theater)
Jennie Purnell (Political Science)

Social Problems on the Silver Screen

Lynn Lysterly (History)
John Michalczyk (Fine Arts)

Enduring Questions

Tolstoy to Chekhov: What is the Good Life?

Tom Epstein (Slavic)

God and the Good Life

Steve Pope (Theology)

Narrating Black Intimacies

Rhonda Frederick (English/AADS)

Black Intimacy and Intersectionality in the US

Shawn McGuffey (Sociology)

Living in the Material World

Dunwei Wang (Chemistry)

Living in the Material World

Beth Kowaleski Wallace (English)

Family Matters: Histories of Adoption and Kinship

Arissa Oh (History)

Family Matters: Stories of Adoption and Kinship

James Smith (English)

Building a Habitable Planet – Origins and Evolutions of the Earth: Theological Perspectives

Natana DeLong-Bas (Theology)

Building a Habitable Planet – Origins and Evolutions of the Earth: Geoscience Perspectives

Ethan Baxter (EES)

Human Disease:

Plagues, Pathogens, and Chronic Disorders
Kathy Dunn (Biology)

Human Disease: Health, the Economy, and Society

Sam Richardson (Economics)

2017–2018 Core Renewal Courses

* = Repeat Courses

Fall 2017

Complex Problems

- * Global Implications of Climate Change
Tara Pisani Gareau (EES)
Brian Gareau (Sociology)
- * Understanding Race, Gender, Violence
Marilynn Johnson (History)
Shawn McGuffey (Sociology)
- Science and Technology in American Society
Andrew Jewett (History)
Chris Kenaley (Biology)

Enduring Questions

- * Humans, Nature, and Creativity
Min Song (English)
- * Inquiring about Humans and Nature
Holly Vandewall (Philosophy)
- * Spiritual Exercises: Engagement, Empathy, Ethics
Brian Robinette (Theology)
- * Aesthetic Exercises: Engagement, Empathy, Ethics
Daniel Callahan (Music)
- * The Body in Sickness and Health
Jane Ashley (Nursing)
- * Reading the Body
Laura Tanner (English)

Roots and Routes:

Reading Identity, Migration, and Culture
Elizabeth Graver (English)

Roots and Routes:

Writing Identity, Migration, and Culture
Lynne Anderson (English)

Death in Ancient Greece:

Achilles to Alexander the Great
Hanne Eisenfeld (Classics)

Death in Russian Literature:

Heroes, Cowards, Humans
Thomas Epstein (Slavic)

Living on the Water: Venetian Art, Architecture,
and the Environment
Stephanie Leone (Art History)

Living on the Water: Coasts, Development,
and Sea Level Change from Venice to Boston
Gail Kineke (EES)

Neuroscience of the Brain:

Performing the Normal and Abnormal
Dan Kirshner (Biology)

Your Brain on Theatre: Neuroscience and the Actor
Patricia Riggin (Theatre)

Understanding Mathematics: Its Philosophical
Origins, Evolution, and Humanity
Ellen Goldstein (Mathematics)

Being Human: The Philosophical Problem of Nature
and Mathematical Knowledge
Colin Connors (Philosophy)

How Democracies Die: A Political Postmortem
Matthew Berry (Political Science)

How Democracies Die: A History Postmortem
Jesse Tumblin (History)

Spring 2018*Complex Problems*

* Planet in Peril

Juliet Schor (Sociology)
Prasannan Parthasarathi (History)

The History and Politics of Terrorism

Peter Krause (Political Science)
Julian Bourg (History)

Beyond Price: Markets, Cultures, Values

Can Erbil (Economics)
Kalpena Seshadri (English)

Enduring Questions

* Living in Material World

Dunwei Wang (Chemistry)

* Living in Material World

Beth Kowaleski Wallace (English)

* Human Disease:

Plagues, Pathogens, and Chronic Disorders
Kathy Dunn (Biology)

* Human Disease: Health, the Economy, and Society

Sam Richardson (Economics)

Growing Up Gendered:

Socio-Cultural Perspectives on Gender
Sharlene Hesse-Biber (Sociology)

Growing Up Gendered:

Contemporary Media Representations
Lisa Cuklanz (Communications)

Passion, Power, and Purpose:

Adolescence in a Digital Age
Belle Liang (Education)

Fictions of Development:

Adolescence in a Historical Context
Maia McAleavey (English)

Metamorphosis: Evolution and the Genetics of Change

Welkin Johnson (Biology)

Metamorphosis: Story-telling as an Attempt to Manage Change

Dayton Haskin (English)

Religious Diversity in the Muslim World

Dana Sajdi (History)

Religion in a Secular World

Jonathan Laurence (Political Science)

Revolutionary Media: How Books Changed History
Ginny Reinburg (History)

Revolutionary Media: How Reading Changes Us
Mary Crane (English)

Worlds of Moby Dick

David Quigley (History)

Reading Moby Dick

Michael Martin (Honors)

Comparative Politics of Human Rights

Jennie Purnell (Political Science)

Human Rights & Social Welfare

Margaret Lombe (Social Work)

Reading & Writing In/Justice: Literature as Activism

Lori Harrison-Kahan (English)

Writing In/Justice: The Power of Response

Eileen Donovan-Kranz (English)

Creating the Modern State: Power, Politics, &

Propaganda from the Renaissance to the 21st Century

Hiroshi Nakazato (International Studies)

Creating the Modern Identity: Power, Politics, &

Propaganda from the Renaissance to the 21st Century

Susan Michalczyk (Honors)

In Search of Human Rights: Health & Healthcare

Lauren Diamond-Brown (Sociology)

In Search of Human Rights: US Foreign Relations

Amanda Demmer (History)

Nature on Exhibit: From Sea Monsters to Sea World

Jenna Tonn (History)

Through the Looking Glass: Business and the Natural Environment

Lucy McAllister (Environmental Studies)

2017–2018 Difference, Justice, and the Common Good Courses

Health and Science Education Disparities
David Burgess (Biology)

Sustainable Agriculture
Tara Pisani Gareau (EES)

Human Rights and American Women's
Writing, 1850–1920
Lori Harrison-Kahan (English)

Asian American Experience
Min Song (English)

Poetics of Rap
Allison Adair (English)

Black & Popular: Speculative Fictions
by Black Writers
Rhonda Frederick (English/AADS)

Gender and Sexuality
in African-American History
Martin Summers (English/AADS)

American Hate: Racism in US History
Lynn Lyerly (History)

Race, Rights and the Law
Alan Rogers (History)

Social Action in America
Marilynn Johnson (History)

Dilemmas of Unity and Diversity in
American Society and Politics
Shep Melnick (Political Science)
Peter Skerry (Political Science)

Introduction to African-American Society
Shawn McGuffey (Sociology/AADS)

Catholicism and Social Responsibility
Kristin Heyer (Theology)

Race, Freedom, and the Bible in America
Yonger Gillihan (Theology)
Joel Kemp (Theology)

Race and Philosophy
Jorge Garcia (Philosophy)

African-American History II
Karen Miller (History)

Unheard Voices: Philosophy at the
Crossroads of Identity
Cherie McGill (Philosophy)

Deviance and Social Control
Stephen Pfohl (Sociology)



CORE RENEWAL PILOT COURSE SURVEY REPORT FALL 2016

Survey Overview

The purpose of the Core Renewal Pilot Course Survey was to gather feedback from students on their experience in the second pilot year of the Core Renewal courses. The survey, conducted in December 2016, was sent to all students enrolled in the Complex Problems and Enduring Questions pilot courses: 208 freshmen (one enrolled in 2 pilot courses); 16 sophomores; and 2 juniors. The survey yielded an overall 74% response rate.

The survey has been conducted in each of the semesters that the Core Renewal Pilot courses have been offered: fall 2015, spring 2016 and fall 2016. Differences in survey results were explored by gender, race/ethnicity, school, course type (Complex Problems vs. Enduring Questions) and individual course.

Most fall 2016 survey results were consistent with results from the administrations of this survey in the past two semesters. Exceptions are discussed in this report, as well as overall results and findings from new questions.

A full analysis of comprehensive survey results from the first four semesters of Core Renewal Pilot courses will be prepared in spring 2017.

Survey Highlights

- ❖ Overall fall 2016 results generally reflected **slightly less agreement with survey items than in past semesters**. Survey items explored student outcomes and experiences related to the content, format and purpose of the Core Pilot courses.
- ❖ However, fall 2016 survey responses were still **positive on nearly every measure**, similar to past Core Pilot survey results. The lowest mean overall scores were still above *slightly disagree* (a value of 3 on the 6-point response scale), consistent with past semesters.
- ❖ Some survey items scored in the “disagree” range when analyzed by course. A full table of mean scores **by course** is provided at the end of the report.
- ❖ Students were asked to describe their Core Pilot course experience in response to three open-ended questions:
 - What was most valuable?
 - What was least valuable?
 - Is there anything you would recommend changing about this Core Pilot course?

Student comments provided qualitative evidence in support of the quantitative survey results. Responses highlighted similar themes identified in previous semesters, including: **course format; content; assignments and building connections**. Full comments are provided [by course](#) in the appendix to this report.

Table 1: Fall 2016 Core Renewal Pilot Courses

| Core Category | Course Name | Course Number | Instructors |
|---------------------------|--|---------------------------|---|
| Complex Problems | Planet In Peril: The History And Future Of Human Impacts On The Planet | HIST15050/ SOCY150901 | Prasannan Parthasarathi Juliet Schor |
| Complex Problems | Can Creativity Save The World? | SOCY150701/ THTR150101 | Crystal Tiala Spencer Harrison |
| Enduring Questions | Truth-Telling in Literature | ENGL170101 | Allison Adair |
| | Truth-Telling in History | HIST170101 | Sylvia Sellers-Garcia |
| Enduring Questions | Humans, Nature and Creativity | ENGL170301 | Min Song |
| | Inquiring About Humans and Nature | PHIL 170301 | Holly Vandewall |
| Enduring Questions | Spiritual Exercises: Engagement, Empathy, Ethics | THEO170101 | Brian Robinette |
| | Aesthetic Exercises: Engagement, Empathy, Ethics | MUSA170101 | Daniel Callahan |
| Enduring Questions | Love, Gender, And Marriage: The Western Literary Tradition | RLRL337301 | Franco Mormando |
| | Love, Gender, And Marriage: Writing & Rewriting The Tradition | ENGL170401 | Treseanne Ainsworth |
| Enduring Questions | Reading And Writing Health, Illness, And Disability | ENGL170501 | Amy Boesky |
| | The Social Construction Of Health And Illness | SOCY170301 | Sara Moorman |

Results: Overall

Table 2: Overall Survey Results (mean scores sorted by fall 2016 level of agreement, high to low)

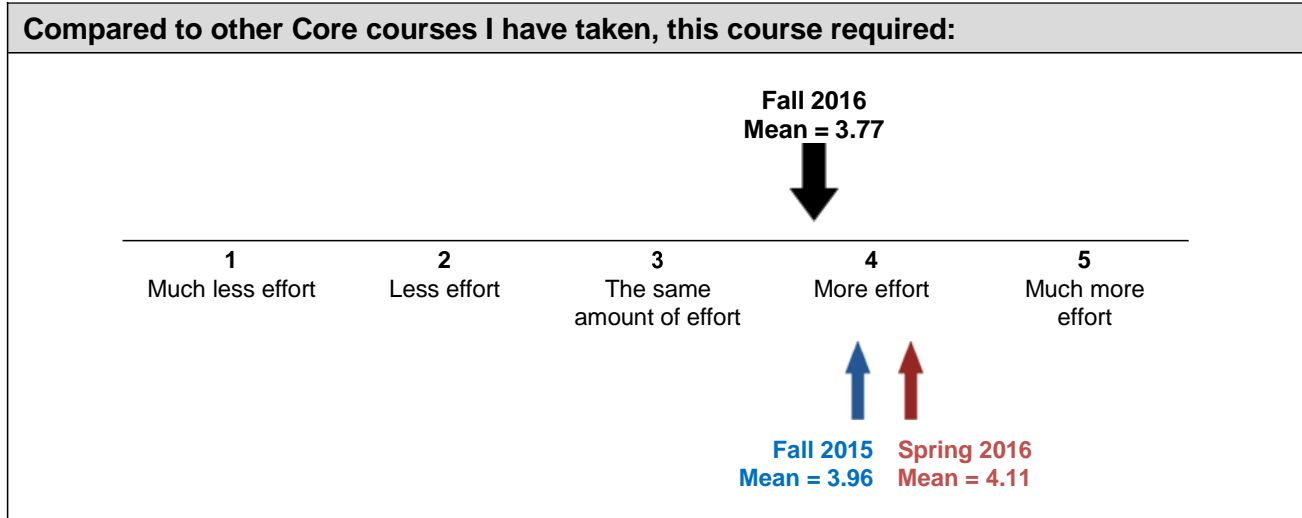
| Scale: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | | |
|--|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| ← | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Slightly disagree | Slightly agree | Agree | Strongly agree | → | |
| Survey Items | | | | | | | Fall 2015 Mean | Fall 2016 Mean |
| <i>Highlighted cells indicate a > .5 point change in the mean compared to Fall 2015 survey results.</i> | | | | | | | | |
| Results between “Agree” and “Strongly agree” (in Fall 2016) | | | | | | | | |
| [EQ ONLY] I explored enduring questions that are central to understanding human life. | | | | | | | 5.57 | 5.61 |
| [EQ ONLY] The questions discussed were of interest to me. | | | | | | | 5.60 | 5.56 |
| I was challenged to think in new ways. | | | | | | | 5.32 | 5.32 |
| I began to understand what ... knowledge I will need to pursue [solutions to CPs...] OR [EQs]. | | | | | | | 5.08 | 5.10 |
| I gained knowledge that will be useful to me in the future. | | | | | | | 5.06 | 5.06 |
| Results between “Slightly agree” and “Agree” (in Fall 2016) | | | | | | | | |
| I learned how these two disciplines relate to each other, and differ in their approaches. | | | | | | | 5.24 | 4.99 |
| I am able to explain the significance... [of a CP/EQ]...to someone who has not taken these courses. | | | | | | | 5.13 | 4.97 |
| I would recommend that other first-year students take [an EQ pair of courses] OR [a CP course]. | | | | | | | 5.35 | 4.96 |
| I was inspired to want to make a difference in the world. | | | | | | | 4.92 | 4.93 |
| I learned the methods that two different academic disciplines use... | | | | | | | 5.00 | 4.93 |
| This course was intellectually challenging. | | | | | | | 5.41 | 4.93 |
| I gained analytical skills [CP] / I practiced and improved my reading, writing, analytical skills [EQ]. | | | | | | | 5.20 | 4.91 |
| I was encouraged to examine my values and beliefs. | | | | | | | 5.16 | 4.83 |
| I learned how to reflect on the meaning and significance of what I experience. | | | | | | | 5.04 | 4.81 |
| [CP ONLY] I gained a greater understanding of a complex contemporary problem. | | | | | | | 5.45 | 4.75 |
| I was encouraged to think about what I want to do with my life. | | | | | | | 4.48 | 4.67 |
| My main reason for taking these courses was to gain an understanding of the [CPs] OR [EQs]. | | | | | | | 4.51 | 4.62 |
| Of all the courses I took this semester, I was most engaged by one, or both, of these courses. | | | | | | | 5.01 | 4.40 |
| [CP ONLY] I was presented with a balanced view of the problem from multiple perspectives. | | | | | | | 5.14 | 4.39 |
| [CP ONLY] The labs required me to engage in active learning. | | | | | | | 4.94 | 4.37 |
| I was influenced to take more courses in one of these two fields. | | | | | | | 4.48 | 4.20 |
| The evening reflection meetings were a valuable part of the course. | | | | | | | 4.39 | 4.04 |
| Results between “Slightly disagree” and “Slightly agree” (in Fall 2016) | | | | | | | | |
| I was helped to think about a future career path. | | | | | | | 3.88 | 3.95 |
| [CP ONLY] The labs were a valuable part of the course. | | | | | | | 4.79 | 3.89 |
| I was helped to move toward making a decision about a major in one of these fields. | | | | | | | 3.95 | 3.86 |
| My main reason for taking these courses was to fulfill core requirements. | | | | | | | 3.95 | 3.66 |
| I considered the role of religious faith in approaching [EQs] OR contemporary problems [CPs]. | | | | | | | 4.06 | 3.51 |
| I think I would have benefited more from these courses if I had taken them later in college. | | | | | | | 3.25 | 3.07 |

Note:

[CP] indicates an item unique to the Complex Problems survey or the Complex Problems-variation of an item that is shared with the Enduring Questions survey. [EQ] indicates an item unique to the Enduring Questions survey or the Enduring Questions-variation of an item that is shared with the Complex Problems survey.

The Core Renewal Pilot courses are structured differently from most other Core courses, in that they include lab and discussion section requirements and cross-disciplinary work. The Core Renewal Committee was interested in determining the level of effort required by these courses. The overall mean response to this question is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Overall Survey Results: Workload



The Office of Marketing Communications collaborated with the Core Renewal Committee in promoting the Core Pilot courses using a variety of channels. Respondents were asked about what influenced them to enroll in a Core Pilot course. Many responded to the most content-rich channels, including the brochure and website with course descriptions, as presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Overall Survey Results: Influences
 (% respondents who selected each option, sorted by fall 2016 responses, high to low)

| I was influenced to enroll in a Core Pilot course by: | Fall 2015 | Fall 2016 |
|---|-----------|-----------|
| Brochure with course descriptions | 77.8% | 61.3% |
| Advising | 29.8% | 30.4% |
| Website with course descriptions and general information about Core Pilot courses | 38.6% | 30.4% |
| Marketing flyer at Admitted Eagle Day | 19.3% | 26.2% |
| Admission | 17.5% | 23.8% |
| Video of faculty discussing their courses | 25.1% | 20.2% |
| Orientation Leader | 22.8% | 19.6% |
| My parents | 18.7% | 14.9% |
| Other students | 8.2% | 7.7% |
| Other (included: topic, schedule, faculty, Admitted Eagle Day presentation) | 5.8% | 4.8% |
| | N = 171 | N = 168 |

Note: Percentages do not add to 100% because respondents were asked to select “all that apply.”

Results: Differences by semester

There were no notable differences between fall 2015 and fall 2016 results by race/ethnicity, by school or by course type. Some differences were noted by gender and by course, though most results were still positive across categories and survey items.

| | | | | | | | |
|--------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|---|
| Scale: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | |
| ← | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Slightly disagree | Slightly agree | Agree | Strongly agree | → |

By Gender

Notable differences (and directional changes) were observed between fall 2015 and fall 2016 male and female respondent rating means on the items listed in Table 6.

Table 6: Changes in survey results by gender, fall 2015 vs. fall 2016

| | Fall 2015 | | | Fall 2016 | | |
|---|-----------|------|----------------------|-----------|------|----------------------|
| | Female | Male | Female-Male Δ | Female | Male | Female-Male Δ |
| The evening reflection meetings were a valuable part of the course. | 4.44 | 4.65 | -0.21 | 4.36 | 3.44 | 0.92 |
| [CP ONLY] The labs required me to engage in active learning. | 4.25 | 4.49 | -0.24 | 4.71 | 3.87 | 0.85 |
| [CP ONLY] The labs were a valuable part of the course. | 4.00 | 4.37 | -0.37 | 4.23 | 3.39 | 0.84 |



CORE RENEWAL PILOT COURSE SURVEY REPORT SPRING 2017

Survey Overview

The purpose of the Core Renewal Pilot Course Survey was to gather feedback from students on their experience in second year of the Core Pilot courses. The survey, conducted in April/May 2017, was sent to all 306 students enrolled in the Spring 2017 Complex Problems and Enduring Questions courses. The survey yielded an overall response rate of 61%.

Survey Highlights

- ❖ As in past administrations of the survey, Spring 2017 survey responses were still positive on nearly every measure. The lowest mean overall scores, among the questions measuring agreement with particular statements, were still above *slightly disagree* (a value of 3 on the 6-point response scale), and the majority of mean response scores was above *slightly agree* (a value of 4 on the 6-point response scale).
- ❖ Some survey items scored in the “disagree” range when analyzed by course. A full table of mean scores by course is provided at the end of the report.
- ❖ With three Complex Problems courses and six Enduring Questions course pairs, the range of student experiences varied widely.
- ❖ Students were asked to describe their Core Pilot course experience in response to three open-ended questions:
 - ❖ What was most valuable?
 - ❖ What was least valuable?
 - ❖ Is there anything you would recommend changing about this Core Pilot course?

Student comments provided qualitative evidence in support of the quantitative survey results. Responses highlighted similar themes identified in previous semesters, including: course content; class format, and workload. Full comments are provided by course in the Appendix B to this report.

Background

Complex Problems and Enduring Questions

Complex Problems courses are six-credit classes that are team-taught.¹ The Core Renewal website describes the course format:

Two faculty members share the same classroom for the normal three hours of weekly instructional time. In addition, students attend smaller weekly 90-minute lab sessions led by graduate students in which they learn by doing, working in teams to apply knowledge to real-world issues. Finally, weekly one-hour evening sessions provide additional possibilities for shared learning experiences and reflection. In the pilot phase, these classes will be limited to 75–100 first-year students, although in the future they may be larger. Lab session enrollments will be capped at 19 students.²

Three Complex Problems courses were taught in spring 2017: “A Perfect Moral Storm: The Science and Ethics of Climate Change” (“Climate Change”); “Performing Politics” (“Politics”); and “Social Problems on the Silver Screen” (“Silver Screen”). Course details are presented in Table 1 and in Appendix A.

Enduring Questions courses are linked pairs of three-credit classes, each taught by a faculty member from a different department. Classes meet separately but are connected by a common topic. The Core Renewal website describes the course format:

Two faculty from different departments teach independent classes connected by a common overarching topic. Faculty agree on three enduring questions to examine in their courses, and they collaborate on some shared readings and assignments. The same students take both classes. In addition to the two linked courses, students participate in periodic shared learning experiences and opportunities for reflection throughout the semester. In the pilot phase, these classes will be limited to 19 first-year students, although in the future they may be larger.³

Six pairs of Enduring Questions courses were taught in spring 2017: “What Is The Good Life?” & “Tolstoy to Chekov” (“Good Life”); “Narrating Black Intimacies” & “Black Intimacy and Intersectionality in the US” (“Black Intimacies”); “Living in the Material World” & “Living in the Material World” (“Material World”); “Family Matters: Histories of Adoption and Kinship” & “Stories of Adoption and Kinship” (“Family Matters”); “Building A Habitable Planet-Origins and Evolutions of the Earth: Theological Perspectives” & “Geoscience Perspectives” (“Habitable Planet”); and “Human Disease: Plagues, Pathogens, and Chronic Disorders” & “Human Disease: Health, the Economy, and Society” (“Human Disease”). Each course had four reflection sessions over the course of the semester. Enduring Questions faculty pairs structured these reflection sessions in different ways. Course details are presented in Table 1 and in Appendix A.

¹ <http://www.bc.edu/sites/core/core-renewal.html>

² <http://www.bc.edu/sites/core/core-renewal/complex-problems.html>

³ <http://www.bc.edu/sites/core/core-renewal/enduring-questions.html>

Table 3: Spring 2017 Core Renewal Pilot Courses

| Core Category | Course Name | Course Number | Instructors |
|---------------------------|---|--------------------------|---|
| Complex Problems | A Perfect Moral Storm: The Science and Ethics of Climate Change | PHIL150101 / EESC150501 | David Storey, Philosophy Corinne Wong, Earth and Environmental Sciences |
| Complex Problems | Performing Politics | THTR150301 / POLI103101 | Luke Jorgensen, Theatre Jennie Purnell, Political Science |
| Complex Problems | Social Problems on the Silver Screen | HIST150701 / FILM150101 | Lynn Lyerly, History John Michalczyk, Fine Arts |
| Enduring Questions | What Is the Good Life? Tolstoy to Chekov God and the Good Life | SLAV116101 THEO170201 | Thomas Epstein, Slavic Languages and Literature Stephen Pope, Theology |
| Enduring Questions | Narrating Black Intimacies Black Intimacy and Intersectionality in the US | ENGL170801 SOCY170401 | Rhonda Frederick, English/AADS Shawn McGuffey, Sociology |
| Enduring Questions | Living in the Material World Living in the Material World | CHEM170101 ENGL170901 | Dunwei Wang, Chemistry Beth Kowaleski Wallace, English |
| Enduring Questions | Family Matters: Histories of Adoption and Kinship Family Matters: Stories of Adoption and Kinship | HIST170201 ENGL171001 | Arissa Oh, History James Smith, English |
| Enduring Questions | Building a Habitable Planet-Origins and Evolutions of the Earth: Theological Perspectives Building a Habitable Planet-Origins and Evolutions of the Earth: Geoscience Perspectives | THEO170301 EESC170101 | Natana Delong-Bas, Theology Ethan Baxter, Earth and Environmental Sciences |
| Enduring Questions | Human Disease: Plagues, Pathogens, and Chronic Disorders Human Disease: Health, the Economy, and Society | BIOL170201 ECON170101 | Kathy Dunn, Biology Sam Richardson, Economics |

Survey Administration

During April/May 2017, students enrolled in Core Renewal courses were sent an email containing an invitation to take the survey. Students were then directed to either the Complex Problems survey or the Enduring Questions survey. The two versions of the survey share many identical questions, with some with some minor variations based on course type (please see Appendix A for survey instruments). The survey was sent to 306 students and yielded an overall response rate of 61% (55% for Complex Problems students and 73% for Enduring Questions students).

While survey respondents were representative of the surveyed population in terms of gender, AHANA status, and undergraduate school, the demographic characteristics of students enrolled in the Core Pilot courses differed somewhat from those of the overall freshman class. For example, women and Arts & Sciences students are overrepresented in the Core Renewal enrollments, while School of Management students are underrepresented. Core Renewal students tended to be clustered closer to the middle in terms of Admission Rating (proportionally fewer top-rated and lower-rated students). Demographic comparisons of first year students are presented in Table 2.

Table 4: Freshman Demographics

| | | Survey Respondents* N=154 | Enrolled in Core Pilot Course Spring 2017 N=253 | Class of 2020 (spring enrollment) N=2,346 |
|---|--------------------------|------------------------------|--|--|
| Gender | | | | |
| | Female | 75% | 70% | 52% |
| | Male | 25% | 30% | 48% |
| Race/Ethnicity | | | | |
| U.S. Citizens/ permanent residents | White | 67% | 65% | 67% |
| | AHANA | 33% | 35% | 33% |
| Race/Ethnicity Unknown | | 3% | 6% | 7% |
| International | | 6% | 4% | 4% |
| School | | | | |
| | Arts and Sciences | 74% | 77% | 67% |
| | Education | 17% | 15% | 23% |
| | Management | 4% | 3% | 5% |
| | Nursing | 5% | 5% | 5% |
| Admission Rating | | | | |
| | 1 and 2 | 5% | 4% | 8% |
| | 3 and 4 | 53% | 49% | 45% |
| | 5, 6, and 7 | 39% | 43% | 39% |
| | 8, 9, and 10 | 3% | 5% | 8% |

"White" and "AHANA" values are based on U.S. Citizens/permanent residents who reported their race/ethnicity. "Unknown" and "International" values are based on the entire defined set.

*Note: survey respondents also included 23 sophomores, 9 juniors, and 1 senior

Influences on Course Selection

The Office of University Communications collaborated with the Core Renewal Committee in promoting the Core Pilot courses using a variety of channels. Respondents were asked about what influenced them to enroll in a Core Pilot course. Many responded to the most content-rich channels, including the brochure and website with course descriptions, as presented in Table 3. Admission and Orientation-related channels were cited less often for students enrolling in the spring than in the fall.

Table 5: Influences on Decision to Enroll in a Pilot Course

| I was influenced to enroll in a Core Pilot course by: | % Respondents who selected each option N=187 |
|--|---|
| Brochure with courses descriptions | 49% |
| Website with course descriptions and general information about Core Pilot courses | 41% |
| Advising | 29% |
| Video of faculty discussing their courses | 26% |
| Other students | 24% |
| Other (included: recommended by faculty member; prior enrollment in a pilot core course; recommendation by friend; email detailing course; topical interest) | 10% |
| Orientation Leader | 9% |
| Admission | 9% |
| Marketing flyer at Admitted Eagle Day | 9% |
| My parents | 5% |

Note: Percentages do not add to 100% because respondents were asked to select "all that apply."

Overall Results

Most survey items asked for level of agreement on a 6-point scale. Mean results are displayed for each item, arranged from highest to lowest.

Table 6: Overall Survey Results (mean scores sorted by level of agreement, high to low)

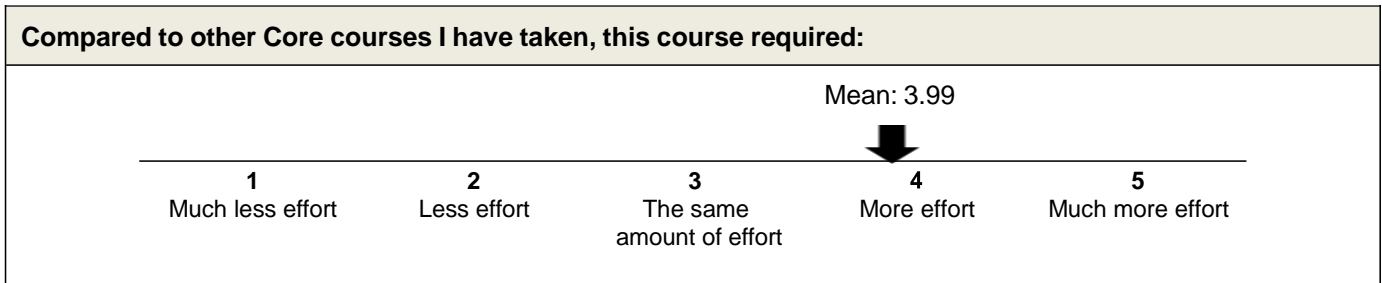
| Scale: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | |
|---|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|-------------|
| ← | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Slightly disagree | Slightly agree | Agree | Strongly agree | → |
| Survey Items | | | | | | | Mean |
| <i>Results between "Agree" and "Strongly agree"</i> | | | | | | | |
| [EQ ONLY] I explored enduring questions that are central to understanding human life. | | | | | | | 5.34 |
| [EQ ONLY] The questions discussed were of interest to me. | | | | | | | 5.26 |
| I learned how these two disciplines relate to each other, and differ in their approaches. | | | | | | | 5.14 |
| I was encouraged to examine my values and beliefs. | | | | | | | 5.12 |
| I was challenged to think in new ways. | | | | | | | 5.05 |
| [CP ONLY] I gained a greater understanding of a complex contemporary problem. | | | | | | | 5.02 |
| I learned the methods that two different academic disciplines use... | | | | | | | 5.01 |
| <i>Results between "Slightly agree" and "Agree"</i> | | | | | | | |
| I am able to explain the significance [of a CP/EQ] to someone who has not taken these courses. | | | | | | | 4.99 |
| This course was intellectually challenging. | | | | | | | 4.97 |
| I gained knowledge that will be useful to me in the future. | | | | | | | 4.91 |
| I learned how to reflect on the meaning and significance of what I experience. | | | | | | | 4.89 |
| I began to understand what ... knowledge I will need to pursue [solutions to CPs...] OR [EQs]. | | | | | | | 4.84 |
| I gained analytical skills [CP] / I practiced and improved my reading, writing, analytical skills [EQ]. | | | | | | | 4.82 |
| I was inspired to want to make a difference in the world. | | | | | | | 4.82 |
| I would recommend that other first-year students take [an EQ pair of courses] OR [a CP course]. | | | | | | | 4.77 |
| [CP ONLY] I was presented with a balanced view of the problem from multiple perspectives. | | | | | | | 4.69 |
| I was encouraged to think about what I want to do with my life. | | | | | | | 4.56 |
| My main reason for taking these courses was to fulfill core requirements. | | | | | | | 4.31 |
| My main reason for taking these courses was to gain an understanding of the [CPs] OR [EQs]. | | | | | | | 4.31 |
| Of all the courses I took this semester, I was most engaged by one, or both, of these courses. | | | | | | | 4.12 |
| [CP ONLY] The labs required me to engage in active learning. | | | | | | | 4.12 |
| I was influenced to take more courses in one of these two fields. | | | | | | | 4.11 |
| The evening reflection meetings were a valuable part of the course. | | | | | | | 4.10 |
| <i>Results between "Slightly disagree" and "Slightly agree"</i> | | | | | | | |
| I considered the role of religious faith in approaching [EQs] OR contemporary problems [CPs]. | | | | | | | 3.99 |
| I was helped to think about a future career path. | | | | | | | 3.87 |
| I was helped to move toward making a decision about a major in one of these fields. | | | | | | | 3.82 |
| [CP ONLY] The labs were a valuable part of the course. | | | | | | | 3.79 |
| I think I would have benefited more from these courses if I had taken them later in college. | | | | | | | 3.03 |

Note:

[CP] indicates an item unique to the Complex Problems survey or the complex problems-variation of an item that is shared with the Enduring Questions survey. [EQ] indicates an item unique to the Enduring Questions survey or the enduring questions-variation of an item that is shared with the Complex Problems survey.

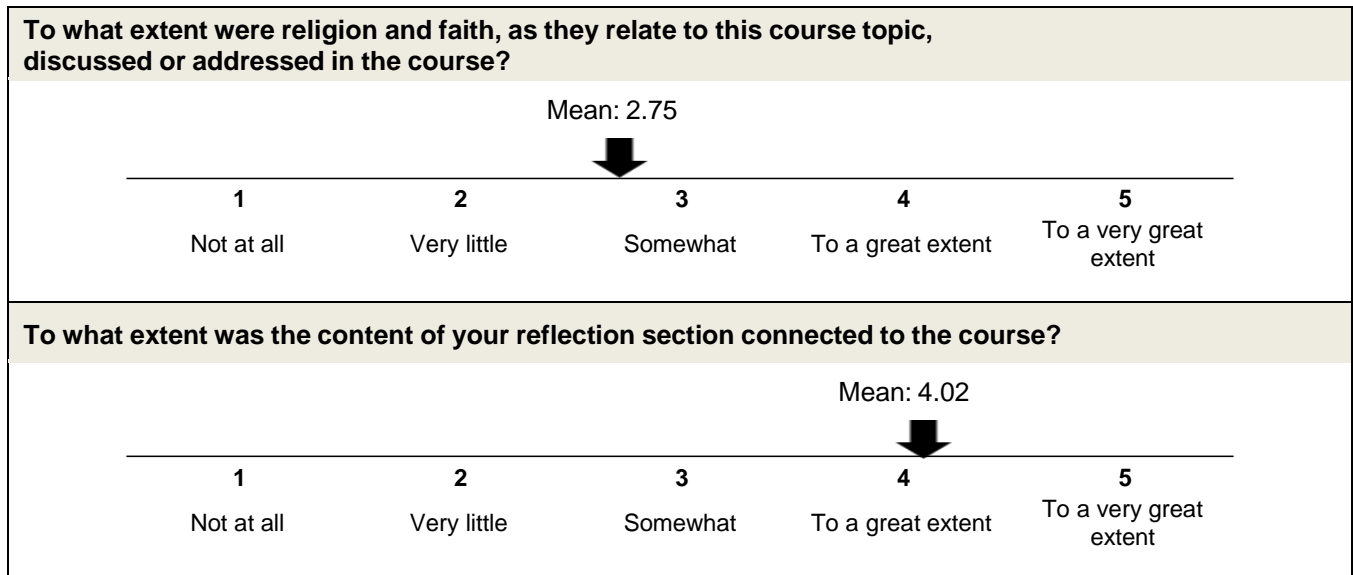
The Core Renewal Pilot courses are structured differently from most other Core courses, in that they include lab and discussion section requirements and cross-disciplinary work. The Core Renewal Committee was interested in determining the level of effort required by these courses in their pilot year. Overall, students reported that the Core Renewal course(s) required somewhat more effort than their other Core courses (the overall mean response to this question is shown in Figure 1).

Figure 1: Core Pilot Course Workload Comparison



Two new questions were included in the 2016-2017 administrations of the survey. Using a scale that differed from the survey’s “agreement” questions, the two new questions explored the extent to which discussion of religion and faith were incorporated into the course(s), and to what extent the reflection section was relevant to the course itself. Overall, students found a positive connection between the reflection section and the course, but reported that religion and faith were not generally incorporated into the Core pilot course. The responses to these questions, however, varied widely by course, as discussed below. Overall mean scores for these questions are presented in Figure 2.

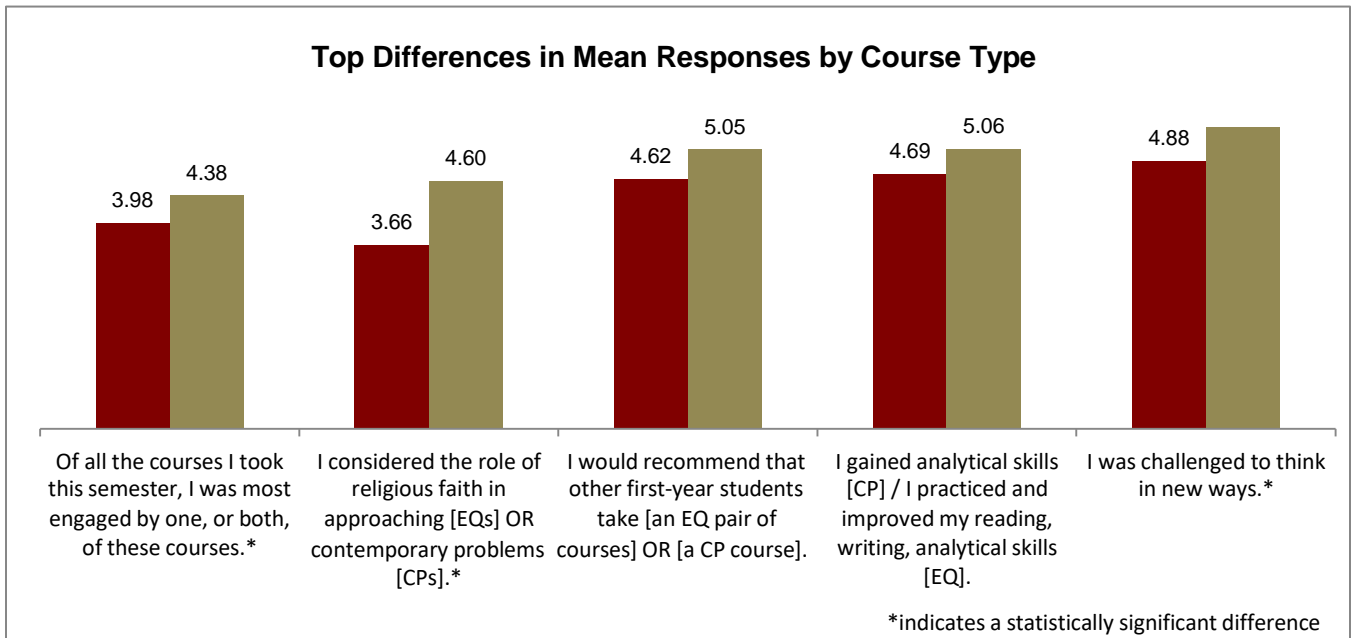
Figure 2



Results by Course Type

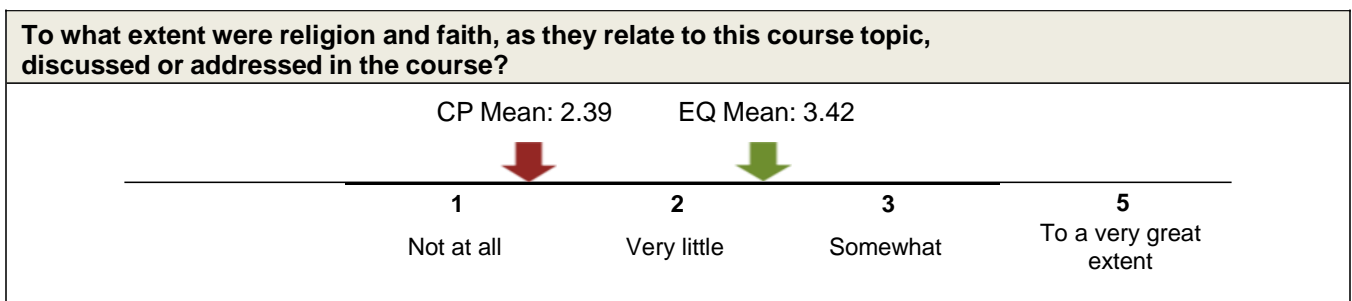
The average responses of students enrolled in the Enduring Questions courses were higher than the average responses of students enrolled in Complex Problems courses, although only three of those differences were statistically significant. The only item for which Complex Problems students had a higher average level of agreement was the statement “I was helped to move toward making a decision about a major in one of these fields,” but that difference was not statistically significant. Figure 3 depicts the greatest differences in levels of agreement of Enduring Questions students and Complex Problems students.

Figure 3



One significant difference between the responses of students enrolled in the Enduring Questions courses and the responses of students enrolled in Complex Problems courses related to the question asking the extent to which religion and faith were incorporated into the course. Students enrolled in Enduring Questions courses were significantly more likely to have had these ideas discussed or addressed in the course than were students in the Complex problems courses. The mean responses to that question in presented in Figure 4.

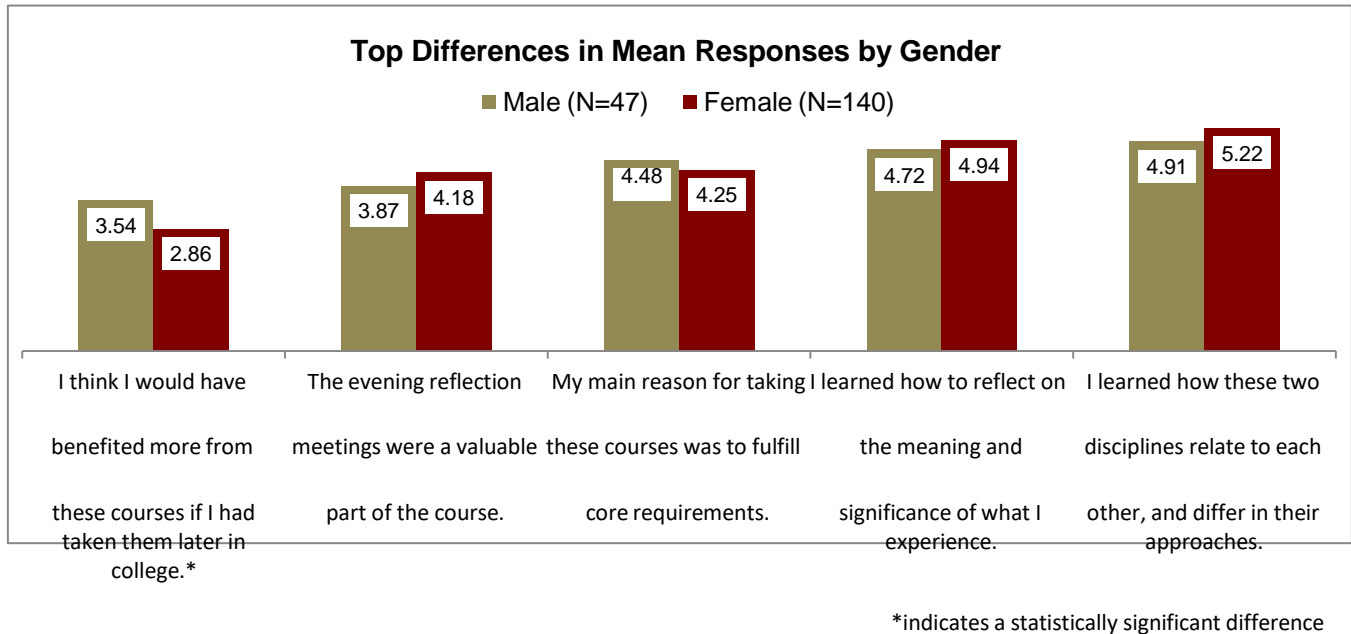
Figure 4



Results by Gender

The differences in overall means by gender were marginal; in fact, only one item (“*I think I would have benefited more from these courses if I had taken them later in college*”) revealed a statistically significant difference between the average response from women and the average response from men (with men more likely to agree with the statement). The results of that item, as well as the four additional items with the greatest differences in the responses (which are not statistically significant) are presented in Figure 5, below.

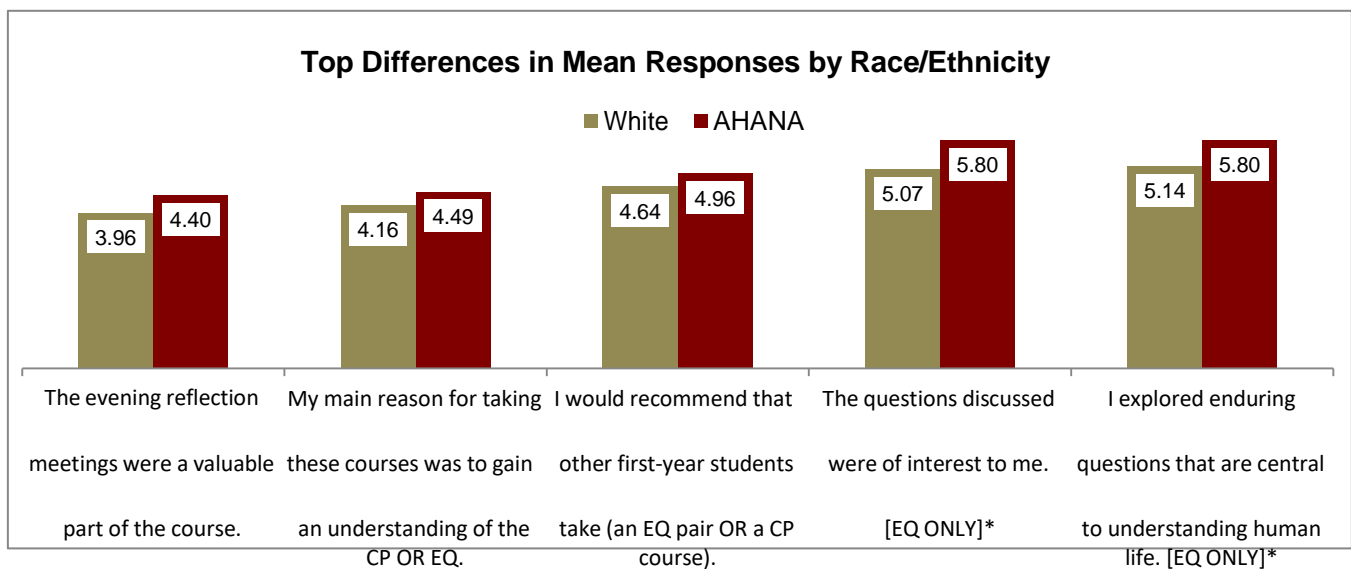
Figure 5



Results by Race/Ethnicity

Differences by race were also marginal. The results of the five items with the greatest differences in the mean scores of AHANA students and White students (of which only two are statistically significant) are presented in Figure 6 (International students and students who did not report their race/ethnicity are excluded).

Figure 6



Four Semester Trends

The Core Renewal Pilot Course Survey has been conducted in each of the semesters that the Core Renewal Pilot courses have been offered: Fall 2015, Spring 2016, Fall 2016, and Spring 2017. The demographic profile of the students enrolled in Core Renewal Pilots has not varied considerably in that time. Men are generally underrepresented in the pilot courses, particularly in the Enduring Questions courses (see Figure 23), and the Morrissey College of Arts & Sciences is overrepresented (see Figure 24), but percentage of students of color in the pilot classes tends to reflect the broader students populations (see Figure 25). In terms of academic preparedness, students taking Core Pilot courses tend to be more concentrated around the middle of the admissions rating scale (a 10-point scale rating the most qualified and prepared students as “1” and the least prepared as “10”); Core Pilot students are more likely to be rated 4, 5, or 6, although that percentage varies by term (see Figure 26). A full table of student characteristics, by term, can be found in Table 5.

Figure 23

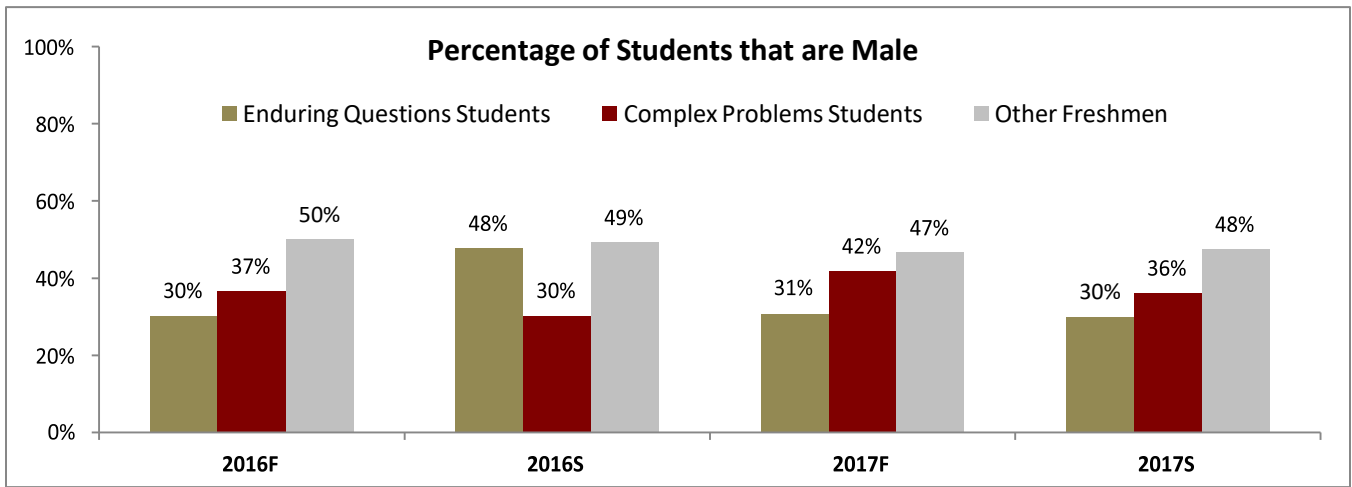


Figure 24

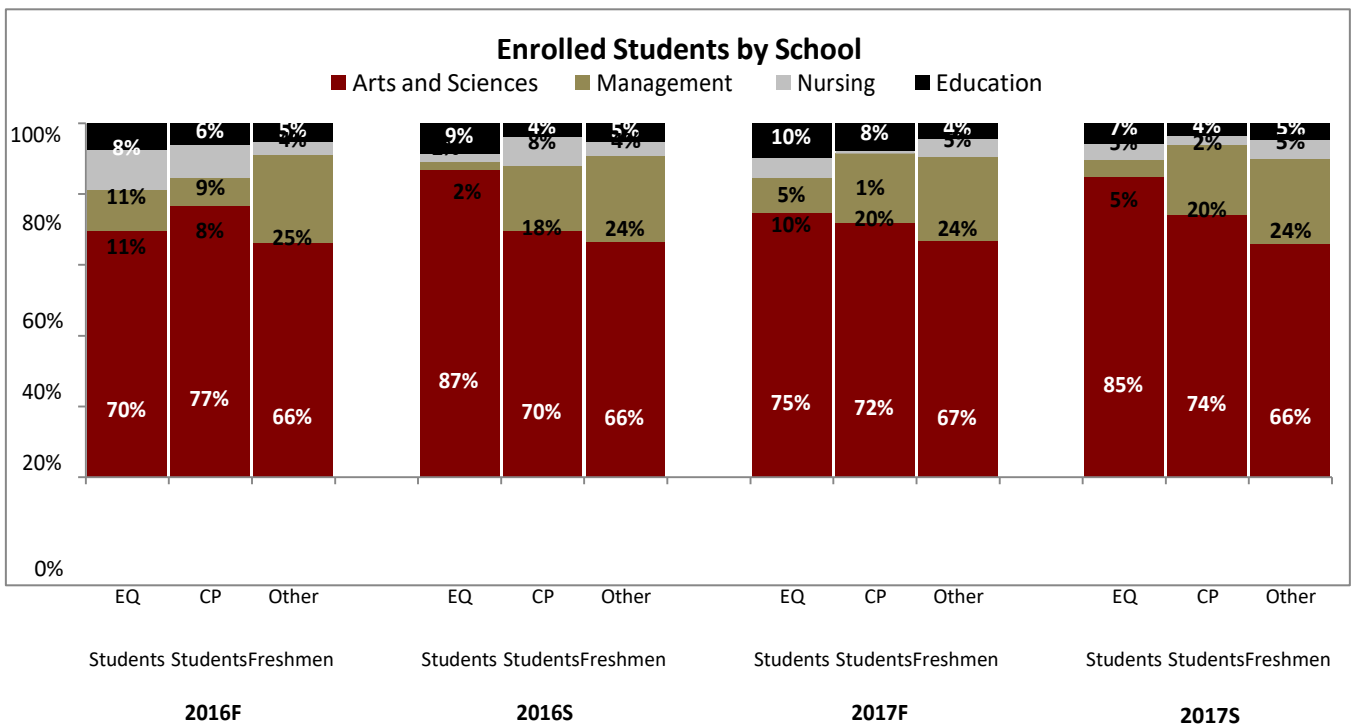


Figure 25

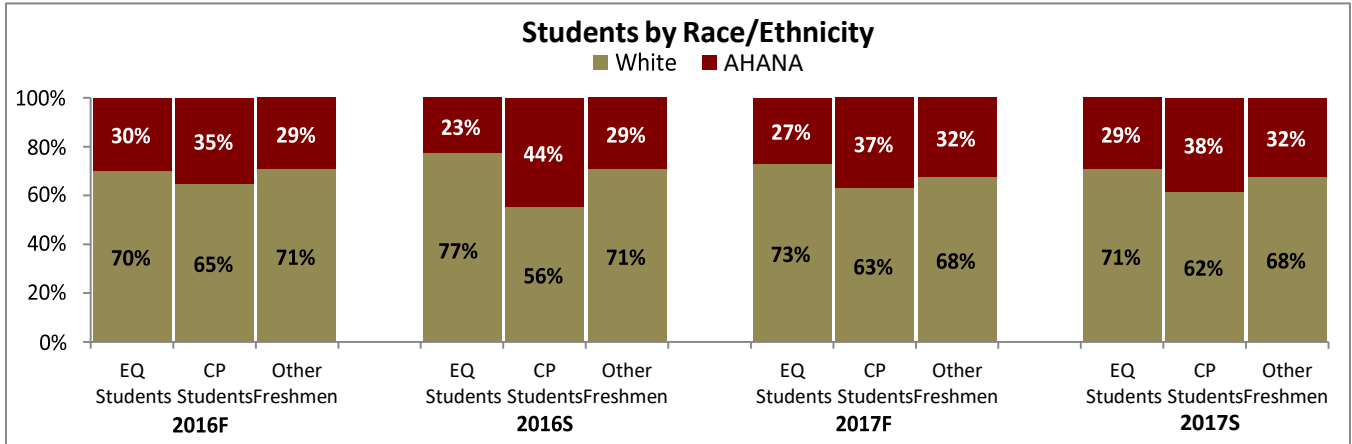


Figure 26

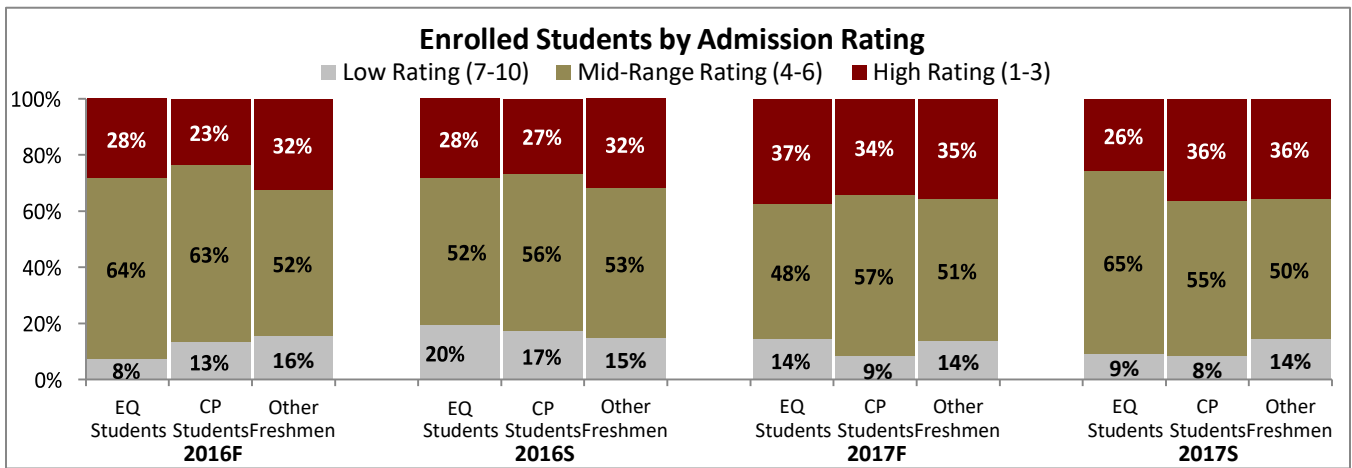
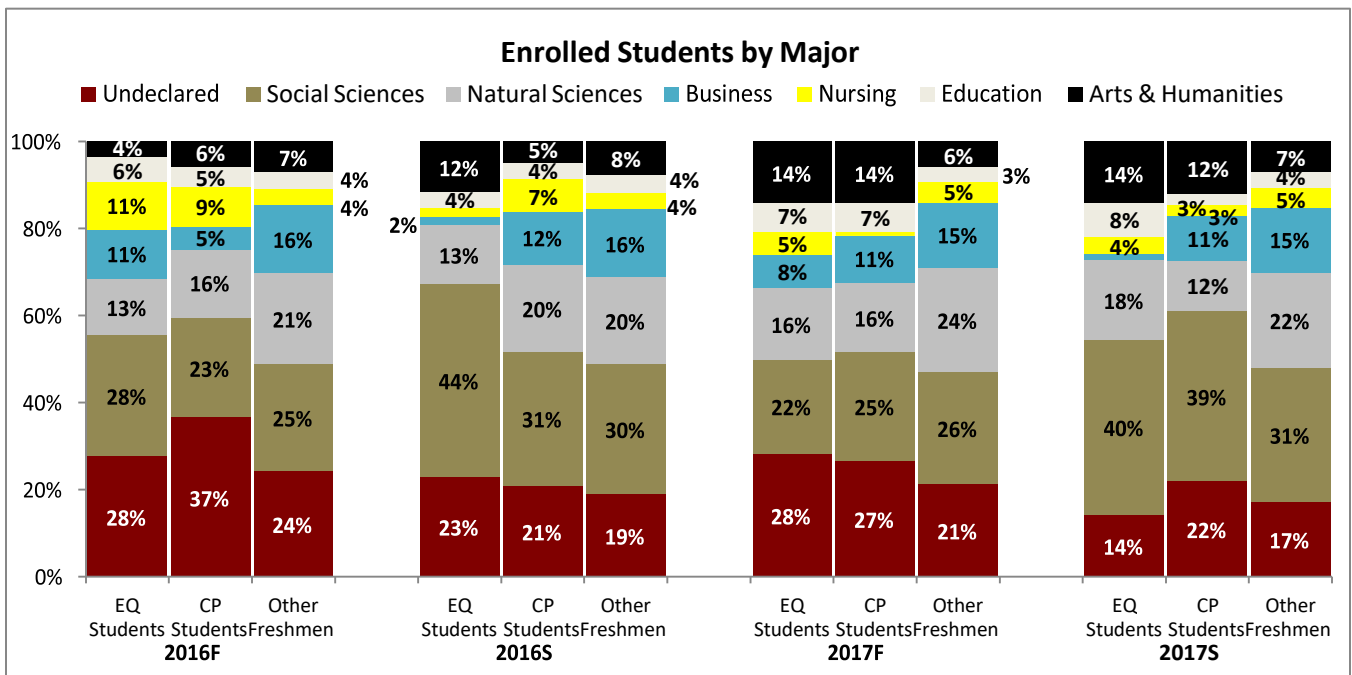


Figure 27



**Table 5: Characteristics of Students Enrolled in Core Pilot Courses
2016F to 2017S**

| | 2016F | | | 2016S | | | 2017F | | | 2017S | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Complex Problems | Enduring Questions | Not Enrolled | Complex Problems | Enduring Questions | Not Enrolled | Complex Problems | Enduring Questions | Not Enrolled | Complex Problems | Enduring Questions | Not Enrolled | |
| Gender | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Female | 95 | 37 | 1,063 | 53 | 24 | 1,111 | 68 | 63 | 1,137 | 106 | 61 | 1,098 | |
| Male | 55 | 16 | 1,067 | 23 | 22 | 1,080 | 49 | 28 | 994 | 60 | 26 | 995 | |
| Total | 150 | 53 | 2,130 | 76 | 46 | 2,191 | 117 | 91 | 2,131 | 166 | 87 | 2,093 | |
| School | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Arts and Sciences | 115 | 37 | 1,410 | 53 | 40 | 1,455 | 84 | 68 | 1,421 | 123 | 73 | 1,380 | |
| Management | 12 | 6 | 530 | 14 | 1 | 531 | 23 | 9 | 509 | 33 | 4 | 506 | |
| Nursing | 14 | 6 | 77 | 6 | 1 | 87 | 1 | 5 | 106 | 4 | 4 | 108 | |
| Education | 9 | 4 | 113 | 3 | 4 | 118 | 9 | 9 | 95 | 6 | 6 | 99 | |
| Total | 150 | 53 | 2,130 | 76 | 46 | 2,191 | 117 | 91 | 2,131 | 166 | 86 | 2,093 | |
| Race/Ethnicity | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>US Citizens Reporting Race</i> | AHANA | 50 | 14 | 550 | 32 | 10 | 568 | 37 | 22 | 617 | 57 | 23 | 600 |
| | White | 93 | 33 | 1,335 | 40 | 34 | 1,376 | 63 | 60 | 1,288 | 92 | 56 | 1,260 |
| | Subtotal | 143 | 47 | 1,885 | 72 | 44 | 1,944 | 100 | 82 | 1,905 | 149 | 79 | 1,860 |
| | Nonresident Alien | 3 | 4 | 156 | 3 | 1 | 157 | 10 | 5 | 140 | 12 | 4 | 141 |
| | Unknown | 4 | 2 | 89 | 1 | 1 | 90 | 7 | 4 | 86 | 6 | 4 | 92 |
| Total | | 150 | 53 | 2,130 | 76 | 46 | 2,191 | 117 | 91 | 2,131 | 166 | 87 | 2,093 |
| Admissions Rating | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| High Rating (1-3) | 35 | 15 | 687 | 20 | 13 | 697 | 40 | 34 | 756 | 60 | 22 | 742 | |
| Mid-Range Rating (4-6) | 94 | 34 | 1,111 | 42 | 24 | 1,163 | 67 | 44 | 1,083 | 92 | 56 | 1,046 | |
| Low Rating (7-10) | 20 | 4 | 330 | 13 | 9 | 329 | 10 | 13 | 291 | 14 | 8 | 299 | |
| Total | 149 | 53 | 2,128 | 76 | 46 | 2,191 | 117 | 91 | 2,131 | 166 | 86 | 2,087 | |
| Athlete | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Varsity Athlete | 2 | 3 | 220 | 0 | 3 | 217 | 5 | 2 | 210 | 1 | 2 | 210 | |
| Not Varsity Athlete | 148 | 50 | 1,910 | 76 | 43 | 1,974 | 112 | 89 | 1,921 | 165 | 85 | 1,883 | |
| Total | 150 | 53 | 2,130 | 76 | 46 | 2,191 | 117 | 91 | 2,131 | 166 | 87 | 2,093 | |
| Majors | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| CSOM Majors | 8 | 6 | 342 | 10 | 1 | 367 | 13 | 7 | 330 | 21 | 1 | 340 | |
| Nursing | 14 | 6 | 77 | 6 | 1 | 87 | 1 | 5 | 106 | 5 | 3 | 108 | |
| LSOE Majors | 7 | 3 | 86 | 3 | 2 | 101 | 8 | 6 | 74 | 5 | 6 | 82 | |
| Arts & Humanities | 9 | 2 | 154 | 4 | 6 | 181 | 17 | 13 | 131 | 24 | 11 | 163 | |
| Social Sciences | 35 | 15 | 537 | 25 | 23 | 709 | 30 | 20 | 570 | 78 | 31 | 707 | |
| Natural Sciences | 24 | 7 | 458 | 16 | 7 | 469 | 19 | 15 | 529 | 23 | 14 | 506 | |
| Undeclared | 56 | 15 | 531 | 17 | 12 | 448 | 32 | 26 | 471 | 44 | 11 | 399 | |
| Total | 153 | 54 | 2,185 | 81 | 52 | 2,362 | 120 | 92 | 2,211 | 200 | 77 | 2,305 | |

Over the last four terms, factors influencing students' decisions to enroll in a Core Pilot course have remained relatively stable: the greatest variation has been between the fall and spring of each academic year. The Office of Undergraduate Admission and Orientation Leaders were strong influences on students' decisions to enroll in each of the fall terms, but were less likely to be cited by students enrolling in spring courses as influencing factors. Conversely, other students had very little impact on students enrolling in the fall, but a much stronger influence on those students registering for the spring semester. The more content-rich channels of communication (brochure, website) were top influencers in all terms, and the role of academic advising remained consistent throughout all four terms. Table 6 describes the influences on students' decisions to enroll in each of the four terms of the Core Pilot courses.

Table 6: Influences on Decision to Enroll in a Pilot Course

| | % Respondents who selected each option | | | |
|---|--|---------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| | Fall 2015 N=171 | Spring 2016 N=82 | Fall 2016 N=168 | Spring 2017 N=187 |
| Brochure with courses descriptions | 78% | 55% | 61% | 49% |
| Website with course descriptions and general information about Core Pilot courses | 39% | 35% | 30% | 41% |
| Advising | 30% | 23% | 30% | 29% |
| Video of faculty discussing their courses | 25% | 23% | 20% | 26% |
| Orientation Leader | 23% | 7% | 20% | 9% |
| Marketing flyer at Admitted Eagle Day | 19% | 17% | 26% | 9% |
| My parents | 19% | 12% | 15% | 5% |
| Admission | 18% | 13% | 24% | 9% |
| Other students | 8% | 23% | 8% | 24% |
| Other (included: recommended by faculty member recommended by friend; topical interest; etc.) | 6% | 10% | 5% | 10% |

In the current, Spring 2017, administration of the Core Pilot Course Survey, the average ratings are consistently lower than average ratings from previous administrations (although still generally in the positive "agree" end of the response scale). The questions with the most variability over the last four terms are presented in Figures 28 through 30 on the following page. Two items are trending up the response scale, but one of those items "*My main reason for taking these courses was to fulfill core requirements*" is arguably value-neutral. The other question that displays a generally more positive trend is "*I considered the role of religious faith in approaching [EQs] OR contemporary problems [CPs].*" A full table of mean scores by term is included as **Appendix C**.

Survey Questions with the Largest Changes over Four Terms

Scale: 1=Strongly disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Slightly disagree; 4=Slightly agree; 5=Agree; 6=Strongly agree

Figure 28

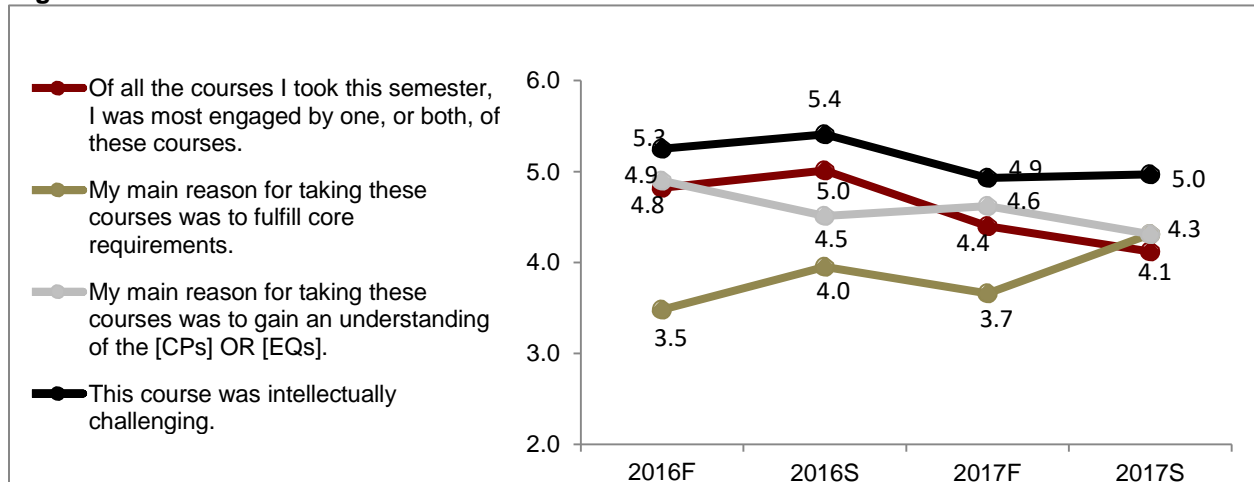


Figure 29

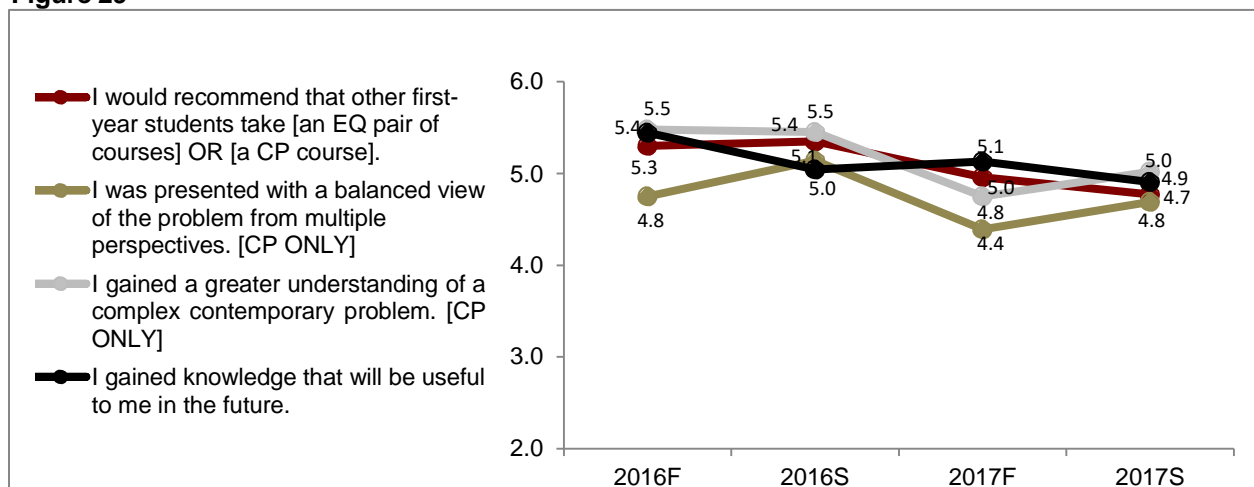
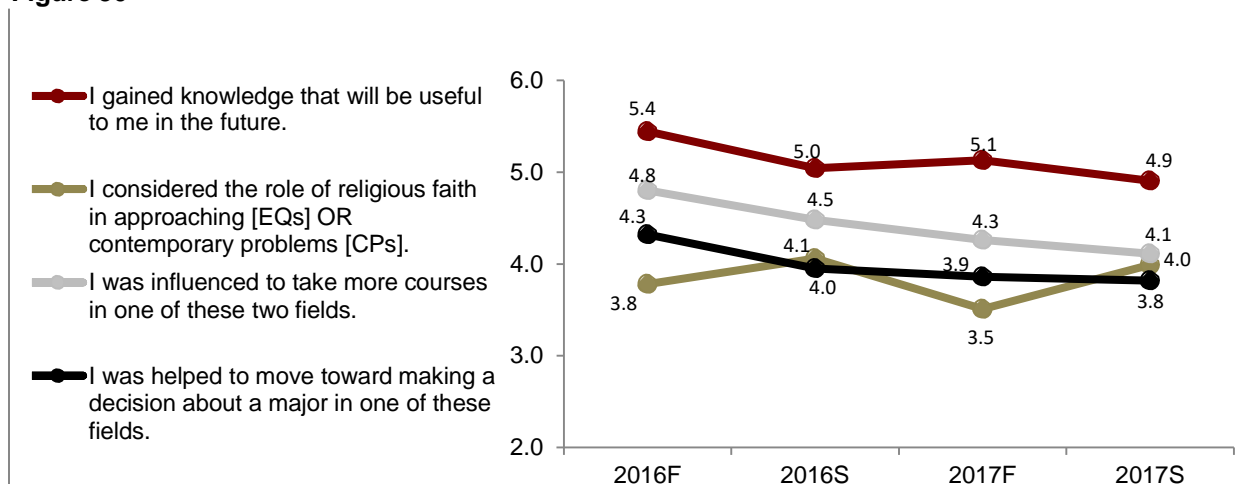


Figure 30



Mean Rating Trends: Complex Problems (CP) Courses

All differences statistically significant unless otherwise noted

Figure 31

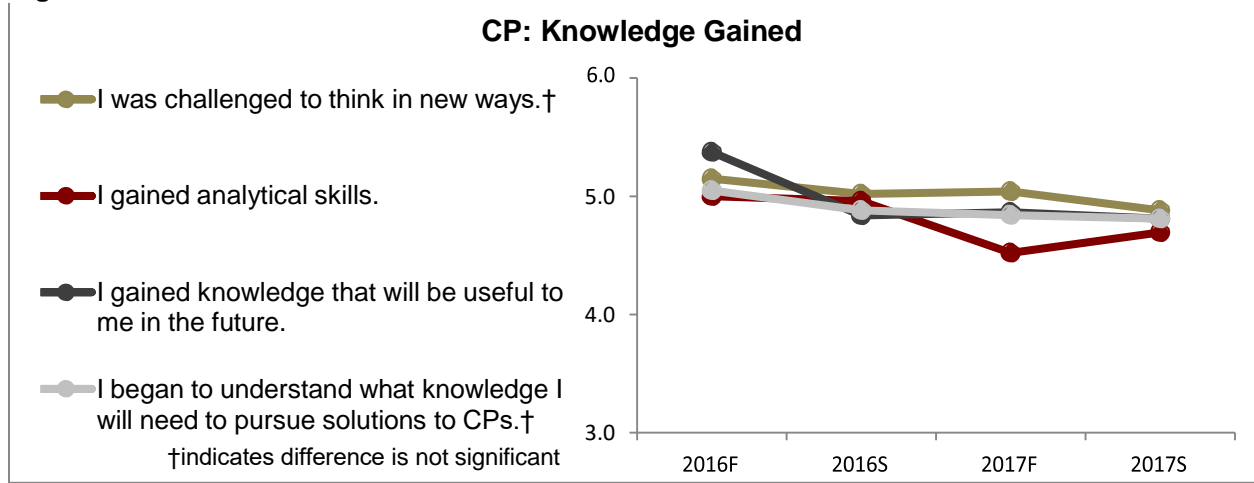


Figure 32

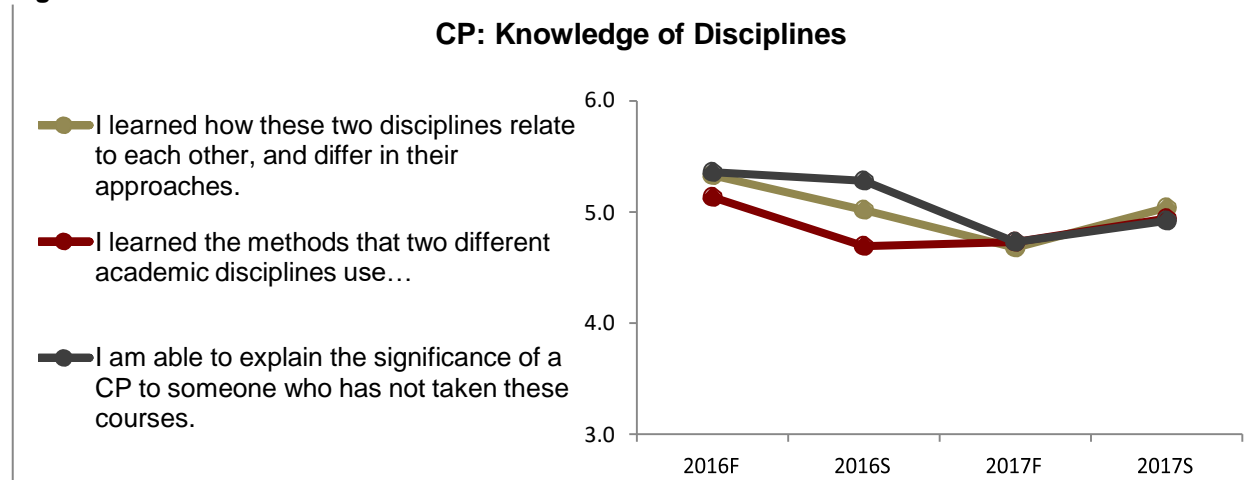
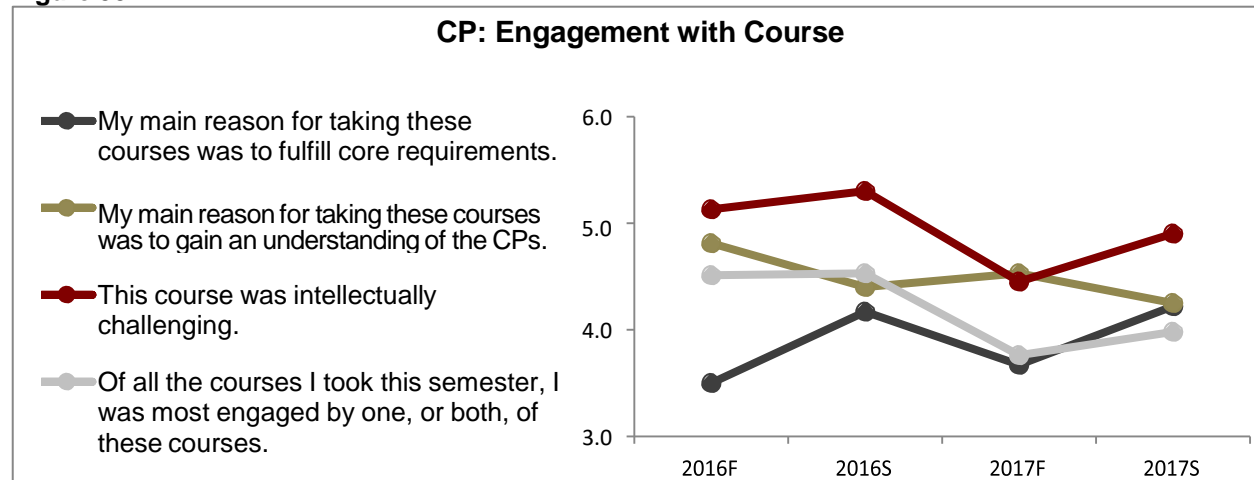


Figure 33



Mean Rating Trends: Complex Problems (CP) Courses

All differences statistically significant unless otherwise noted

Figure 34

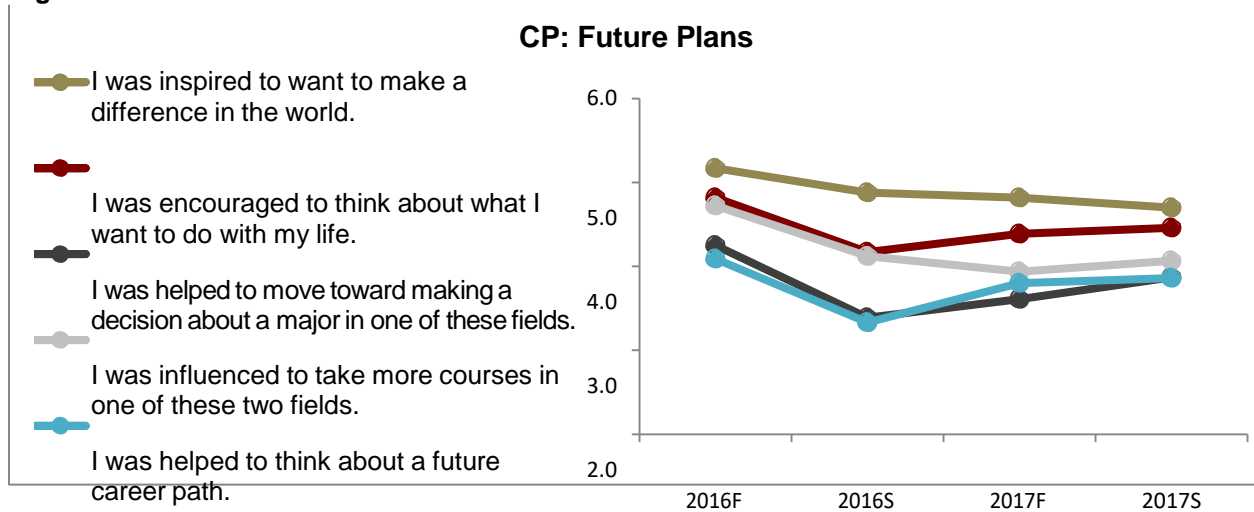


Figure 35

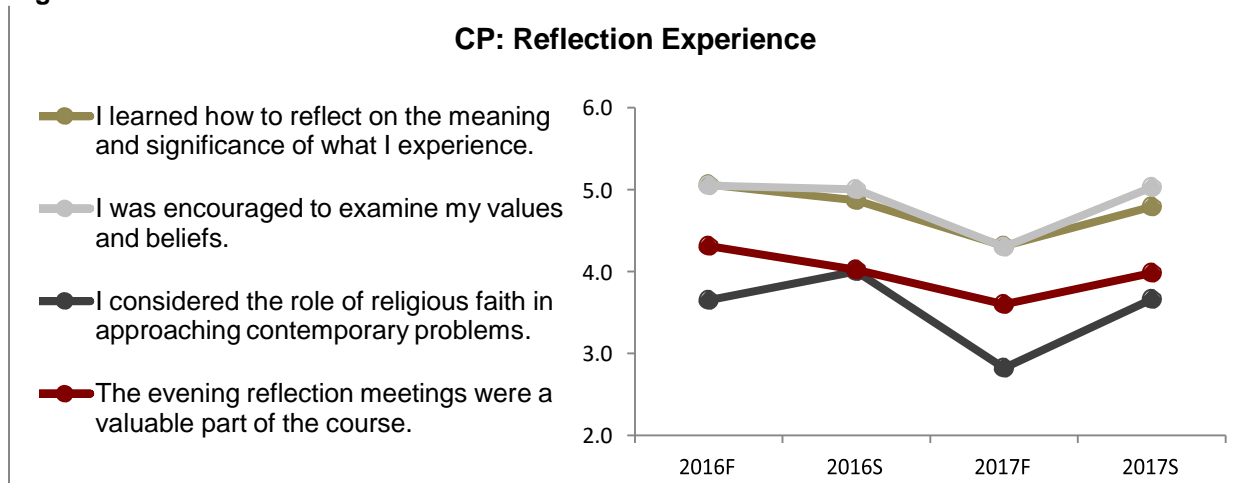
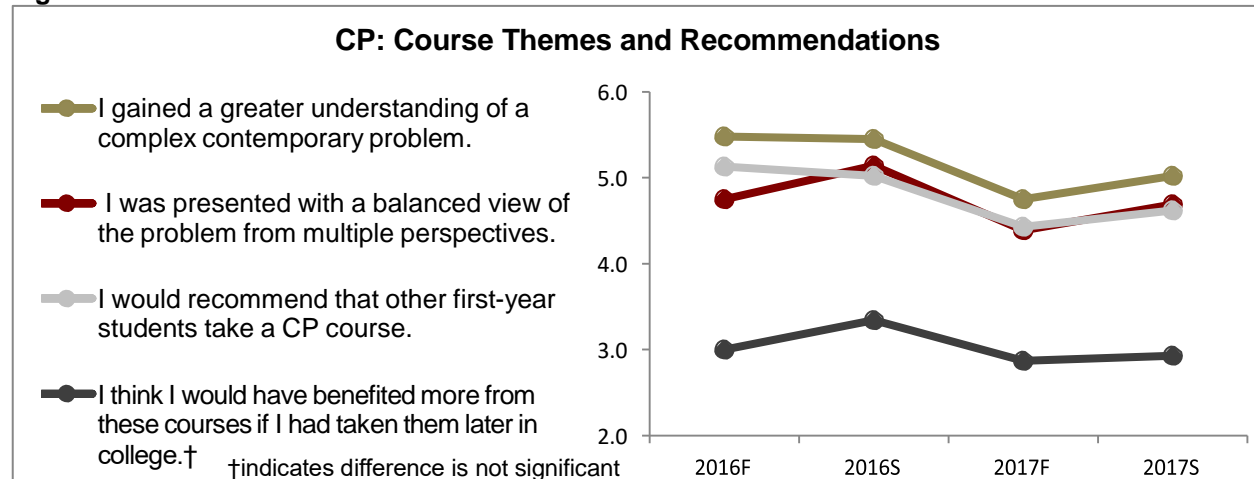


Figure 36



**Mean Rating Trends:
Enduring Questions (EQ) Courses**
All differences statistically significant unless otherwise noted

Figure 37

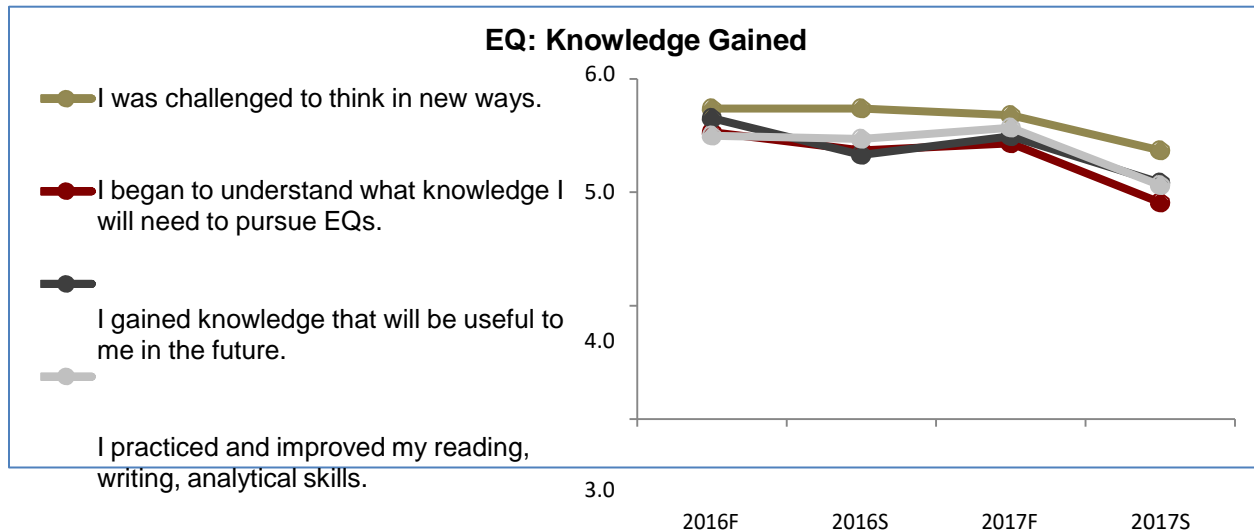


Figure 38

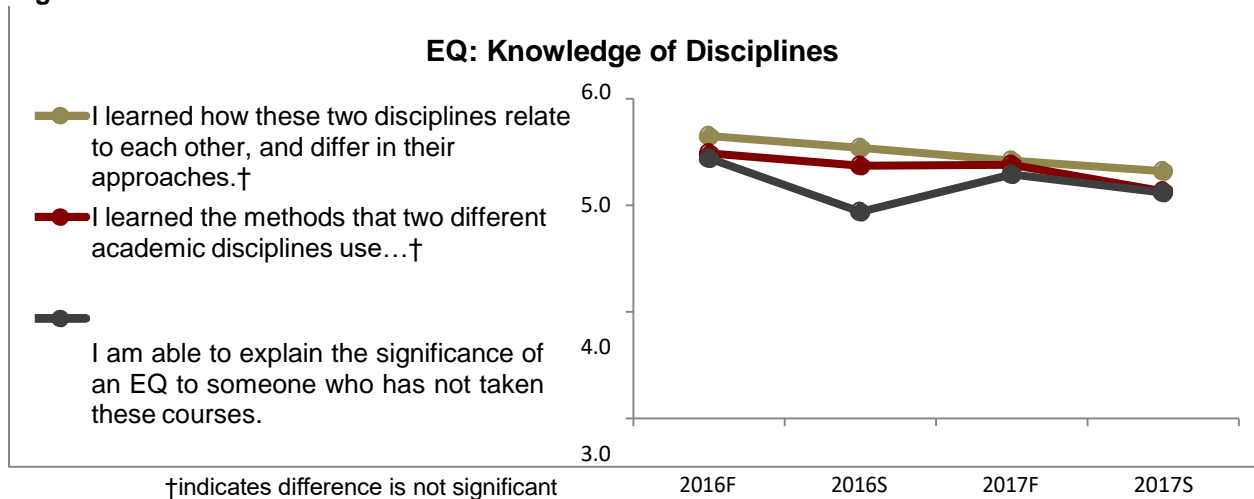
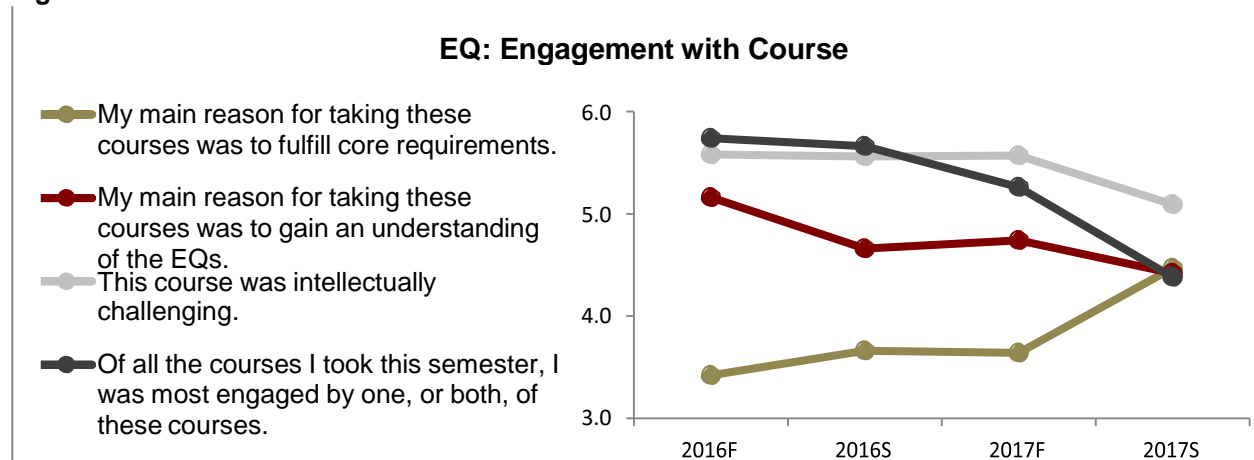


Figure 39



Mean Rating Trends: Enduring Questions (EQ) Courses

All differences statistically significant unless otherwise noted

Figure 40

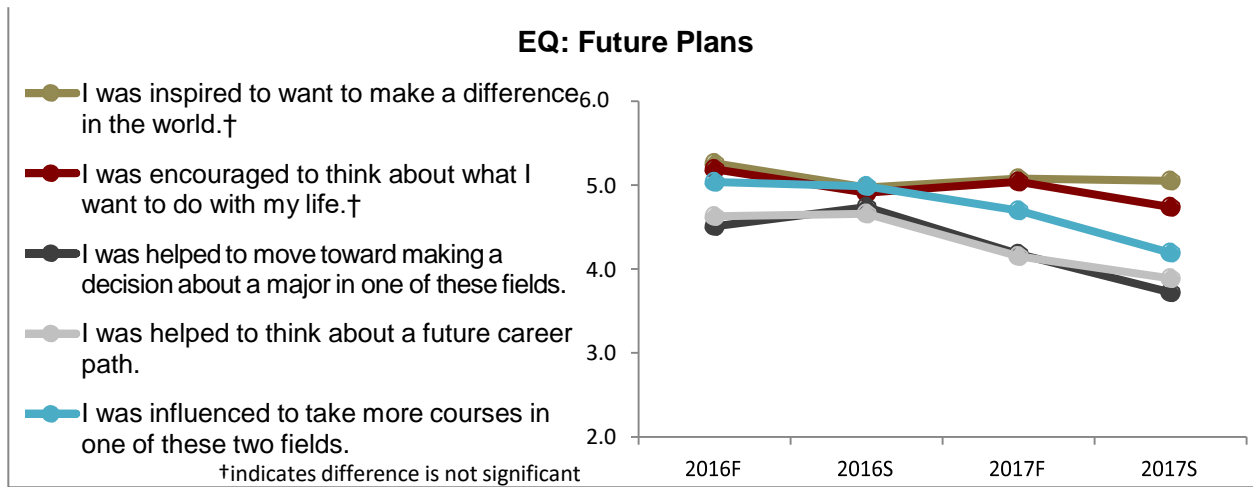


Figure 41

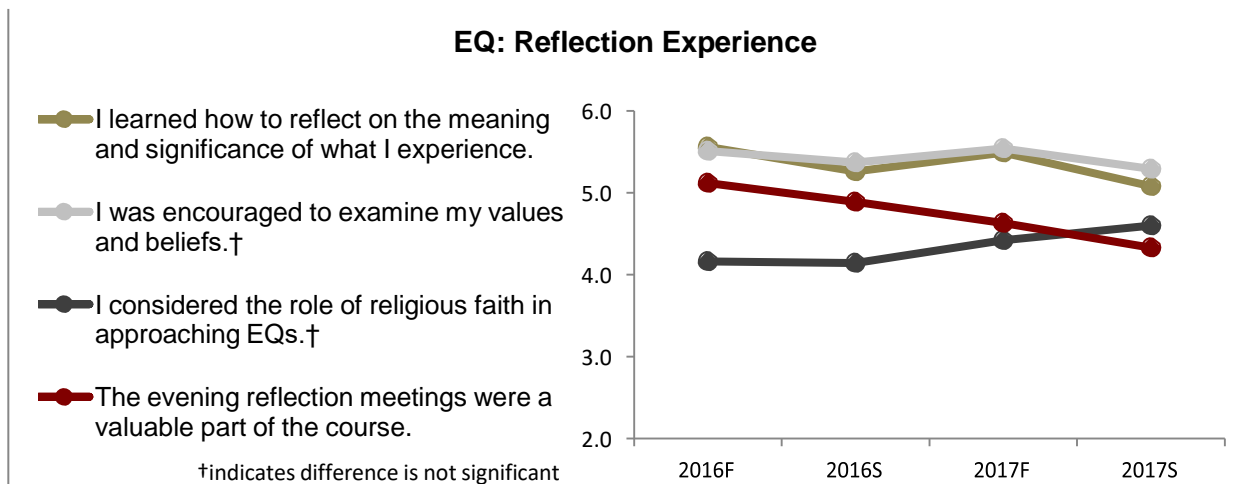
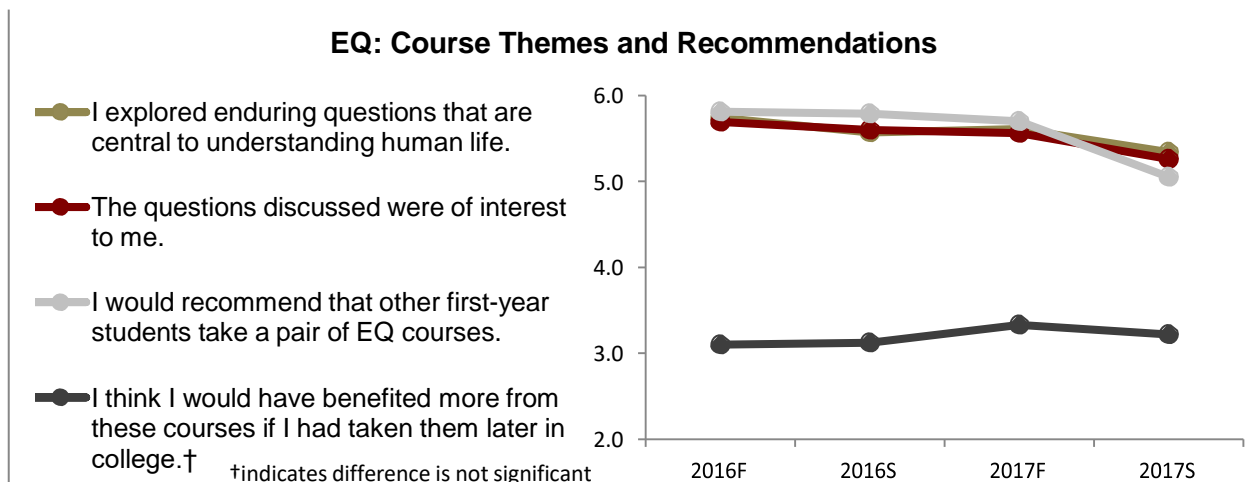


Figure 42



Student Outcomes

Students who participated in the first year of the Core Renewal Pilot Courses (2015-2016) have just finished their sophomore year. While it is still early in their respective college careers, IRPA conducted a preliminary of various student outcomes, comparing Core Renewal students with other students from the Class of 2019. So far, no significant differences between the pilot group of students and their classmates were found. Outcomes measures such as student retention, retention in the major, and cumulative GPA are presented below in Table 7. It will be interesting to track these students in the coming years to see if their experience with the new Core is eventually associated with particular measurable outcomes.

Table 7: Selected Outcomes for Core Pilot Participants

| | |
|--|------|
| Retention through end of Sophomore Year | |
| Core Renewal Students | 95% |
| All Other Class of 2019 | 93% |
| | |
| Transferred within Boston College | |
| Core Renewal Students | 6% |
| All Other Class of 2019* | 4% |
| Internal transfer rate for women: 6% | |
| | |
| Changed Major | |
| Core Renewal Students | 23% |
| All Other Class of 2019 | 22% |
| | |
| Average GPA at end of Sophomore Year | |
| Core Renewal Students | 3.29 |
| All Other Class of 2019 | 3.30 |

Appendix C: Mean Scores by Term

| | Mean 2016F | Mean 2016S | Mean 2017F | Mean 2017S | 4-term Average |
|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------|
| [EQ ONLY] I explored enduring questions that are central to understanding human life. | 5.7 | 5.6 | 5.6 | 5.3 | 5.6 |
| [EQ ONLY] The questions discussed were of interest to me. | 5.7 | 5.6 | 5.6 | 5.3 | 5.5 |
| I gained a greater understanding of a complex contemporary problem. [CP ONLY] | 5.5 | 5.5 | 4.8 | 5.0 | 5.2 |
| I learned how these two disciplines relate to each other, and differ in their approaches. | 5.4 | 5.2 | 5.0 | 5.1 | 5.2 |
| I was challenged to think in new ways. | 5.3 | 5.3 | 5.3 | 5.1 | 5.2 |
| This course was intellectually challenging. | 5.3 | 5.4 | 4.9 | 5.0 | 5.1 |
| I would recommend that other first-year students take [an EQ pair of courses] OR [a CP course]. | 5.3 | 5.4 | 5.0 | 4.8 | 5.1 |
| I gained knowledge that will be useful to me in the future. | 5.4 | 5.0 | 5.1 | 4.9 | 5.1 |
| I am able to explain the significance... [of a CP/EQ]...to someone who has not taken these courses. | 5.4 | 5.1 | 5.0 | 5.0 | 5.1 |
| I began to understand what ... knowledge I will need to pursue [solutions to CPs...] OR [EQs]. | 5.2 | 5.1 | 5.1 | 4.8 | 5.1 |
| I was encouraged to examine my values and beliefs. | 5.2 | 5.2 | 4.8 | 5.1 | 5.1 |
| I learned the methods that two different academic disciplines use... | 5.2 | 5.0 | 5.0 | 5.0 | 5.1 |
| I learned how to reflect on the meaning and significance of what I experience. | 5.2 | 5.0 | 4.8 | 4.9 | 5.0 |
| I was inspired to want to make a difference in the world. | 5.2 | 4.9 | 4.9 | 4.8 | 5.0 |
| I gained analytical skills [CP] / I practiced and improved my reading, writing, analytical skills [EQ]. | 5.1 | 5.2 | 5.0 | 4.8 | 5.0 |
| I was presented with a balanced view of the problem from multiple perspectives. [CP ONLY] | 4.8 | 5.1 | 4.4 | 4.7 | 4.7 |
| I was encouraged to think about what I want to do with my life. | 4.9 | 4.5 | 4.7 | 4.6 | 4.7 |
| Of all the courses I took this semester, I was most engaged by one, or both, of these courses. | 4.8 | 5.0 | 4.4 | 4.1 | 4.6 |
| My main reason for taking these courses was to gain an understanding of the [CPs] OR [EQs]. | 4.9 | 4.5 | 4.6 | 4.3 | 4.6 |
| I was influenced to take more courses in one of these two fields. | 4.8 | 4.5 | 4.3 | 4.1 | 4.4 |
| The evening reflection meetings were a valuable part of the course. | 4.5 | 4.4 | 4.0 | 4.1 | 4.3 |
| I was helped to move toward making a decision about a major in one of these fields. | 4.3 | 4.0 | 3.9 | 3.8 | 4.0 |
| I was helped to think about a future career path. | 4.2 | 3.9 | 4.0 | 3.9 | 4.0 |
| My main reason for taking these courses was to fulfill core requirements. | 3.5 | 4.0 | 3.7 | 4.3 | 3.9 |
| I considered the role of religious faith in approaching [EQs] OR contemporary problems [CPs]. | 3.8 | 4.1 | 3.5 | 4.0 | 3.8 |
| I think I would have benefited more from these courses if I had taken them later in college. | 3.0 | 3.3 | 3.1 | 3.0 | 3.1 |

Core Overall Summary - Fall 2016

Fall 2016

Project Audience 14909

Responses Received 12981

Response Ratio 87.07%

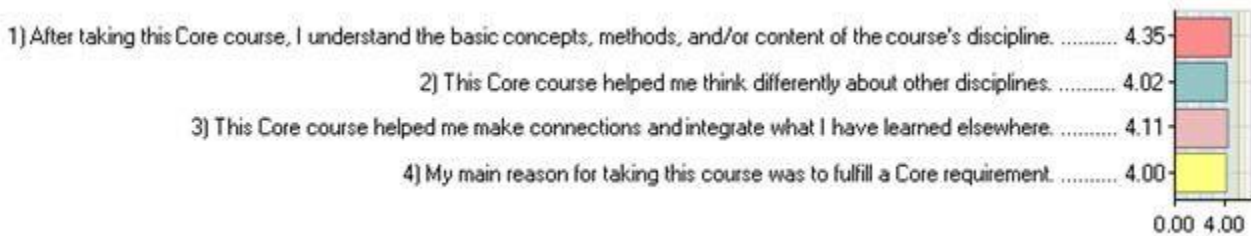
Creation Date Mon, Jan 09, 2017



Core Survey Questions for All Core Courses

| Fall 2016 | |
|----------------|----------|
| Raters | Students |
| Responded | 12981 |
| Invited | 14909 |
| Response Ratio | 87.07% |

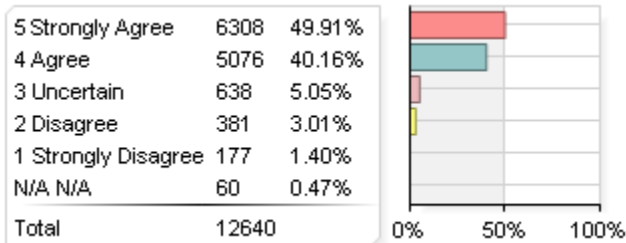
Core: Select your agreement level with the following statements about this course.



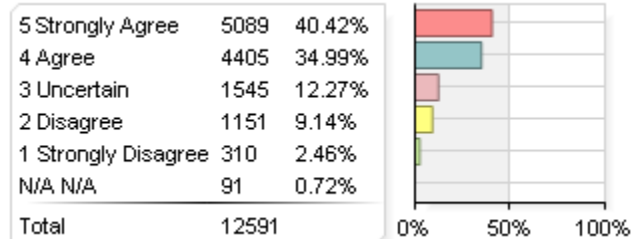
Core: Select your agreement level with the following statements about this course.

| Competency Statistics | Value |
|-----------------------|---------|
| Mean | 4.12 |
| Median | 4.00 |
| Mode | 5 |
| Standard Deviation | +/-1.07 |

1. After taking this Core course, I understand the basic concepts, methods, and/or content of the course's discipline.



2. This Core course helped me think differently about other disciplines.



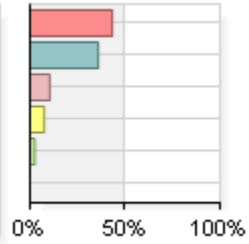
| Statistics | Value |
|--------------------|---------|
| Response Count | 12640 |
| Mean | 4.35 |
| Median | 5.00 |
| Standard Deviation | +/-0.82 |

| Statistics | Value |
|--------------------|---------|
| Response Count | 12591 |
| Mean | 4.02 |
| Median | 4.00 |
| Standard Deviation | +/-1.06 |

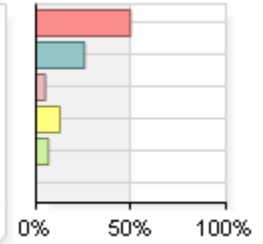
3. This Core course helped me make connections and integrate what I have learned elsewhere.

4. My main reason for taking this course was to fulfill a Core requirement.

| | | |
|---------------------|--------------|--------|
| 5 Strongly Agree | 5413 | 43.22% |
| 4 Agree | 4494 | 35.89% |
| 3 Uncertain | 1300 | 10.38% |
| 2 Disagree | 939 | 7.50% |
| 1 Strongly Disagree | 306 | 2.44% |
| N/A N/A | 71 | 0.57% |
| Total | 12523 | |



| | | |
|---------------------|--------------|--------|
| 5 Strongly Agree | 6234 | 49.63% |
| 4 Agree | 3194 | 25.43% |
| 3 Uncertain | 597 | 4.75% |
| 2 Disagree | 1579 | 12.57% |
| 1 Strongly Disagree | 812 | 6.46% |
| N/A N/A | 144 | 1.15% |
| Total | 12560 | |



| Statistics | Value |
|--------------------|---------|
| Response Count | 12523 |
| Mean | 4.11 |
| Median | 4.00 |
| Standard Deviation | +/-1.03 |

| Statistics | Value |
|--------------------|---------|
| Response Count | 12560 |
| Mean | 4.00 |
| Median | 5.00 |
| Standard Deviation | +/-1.28 |

CRP Pilot Core Overall Summary - Fall 2016

Fall 2016

Project Audience 455
Responses Received 371
Response Ratio 81.54%

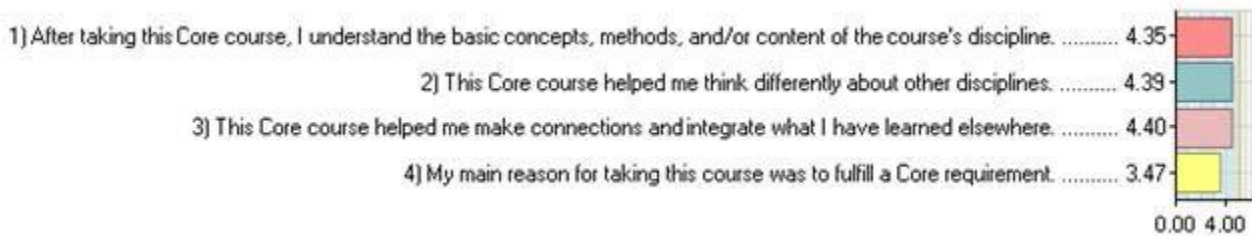
Creation Date Mon, Jan 09, 2017



CRP Core Pilot Summary

| Fall 2016 | |
|----------------|----------|
| Raters | Students |
| Responded | 371 |
| Invited | 455 |
| Response Ratio | 81.54% |

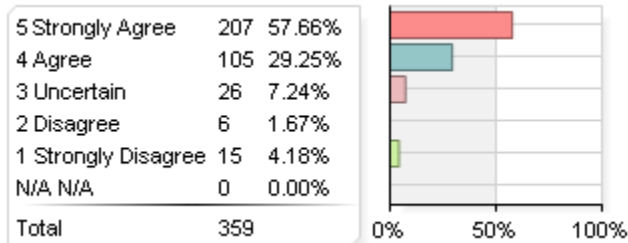
Core: Select your agreement level with the following statements about this course.



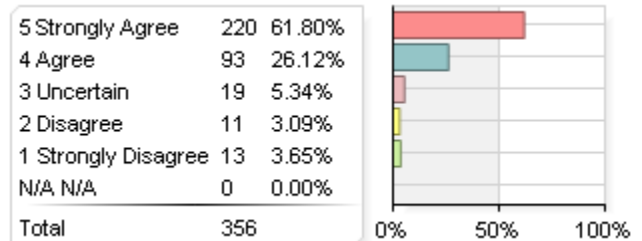
Core: Select your agreement level with the following statements about this course.

| Competency Statistics | Value |
|-----------------------|---------|
| Mean | 4.15 |
| Median | 5.00 |
| Mode | 5 |
| Standard Deviation | +/-1.16 |

1. After taking this Core course, I understand the basic concepts, methods, and/or content of the course's discipline.



2. This Core course helped me think differently about other disciplines.



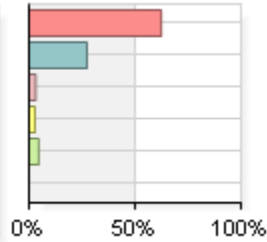
| Statistics | Value |
|--------------------|---------|
| Response Count | 359 |
| Mean | 4.35 |
| Median | 5.00 |
| Standard Deviation | +/-0.99 |

| Statistics | Value |
|--------------------|---------|
| Response Count | 356 |
| Mean | 4.39 |
| Median | 5.00 |
| Standard Deviation | +/-0.99 |

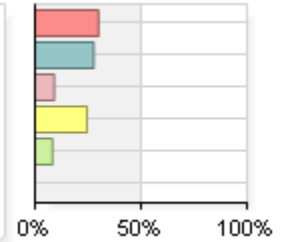
3. This Core course helped me make connections and integrate what I have learned elsewhere.

4. My main reason for taking this course was to fulfill a Core requirement.

| | | |
|---------------------|-----|--------|
| 5 Strongly Agree | 222 | 62.36% |
| 4 Agree | 97 | 27.25% |
| 3 Uncertain | 11 | 3.09% |
| 2 Disagree | 10 | 2.81% |
| 1 Strongly Disagree | 16 | 4.49% |
| N/A N/A | 0 | 0.00% |
| Total | 356 | |



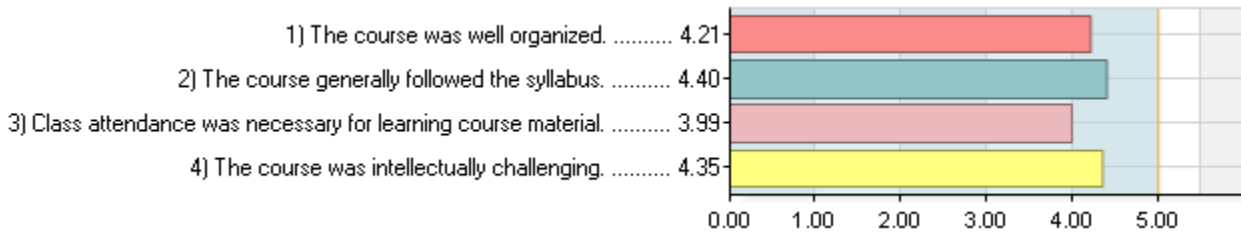
| | | |
|---------------------|-----|--------|
| 5 Strongly Agree | 106 | 29.86% |
| 4 Agree | 98 | 27.61% |
| 3 Uncertain | 32 | 9.01% |
| 2 Disagree | 87 | 24.51% |
| 1 Strongly Disagree | 29 | 8.17% |
| N/A N/A | 3 | 0.85% |
| Total | 355 | |



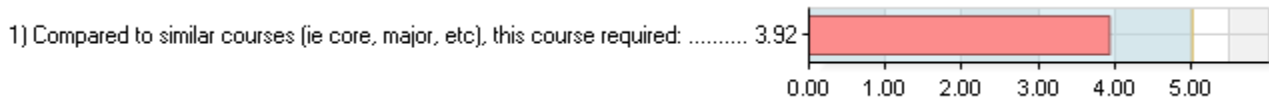
| Statistics | Value |
|--------------------|---------|
| Response Count | 356 |
| Mean | 4.40 |
| Median | 5.00 |
| Standard Deviation | +/-1.01 |

| Statistics | Value |
|--------------------|---------|
| Response Count | 355 |
| Mean | 3.47 |
| Median | 4.00 |
| Standard Deviation | +/-1.36 |

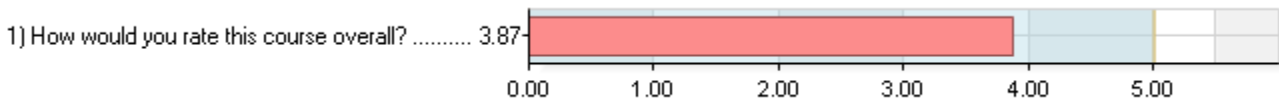
Select your agreement level with the following statements about this course.



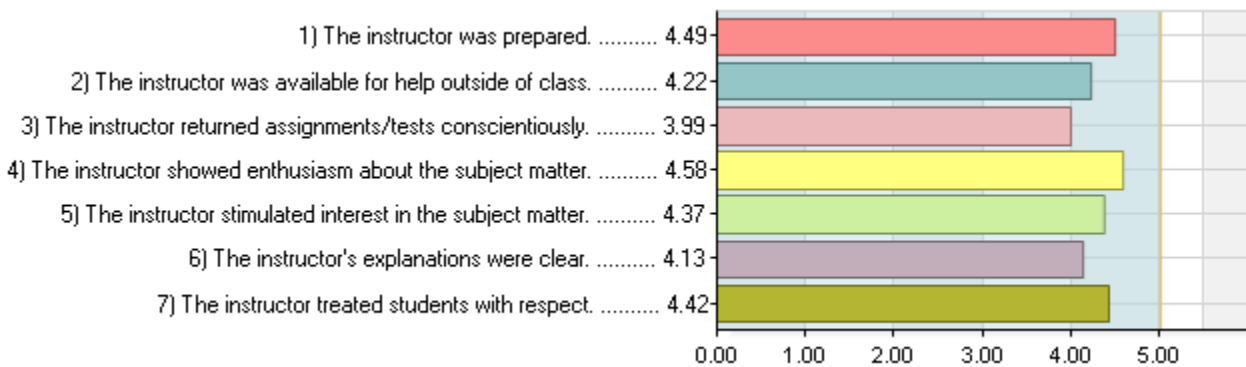
Compared to similar courses (ie core, major, etc), this course required:



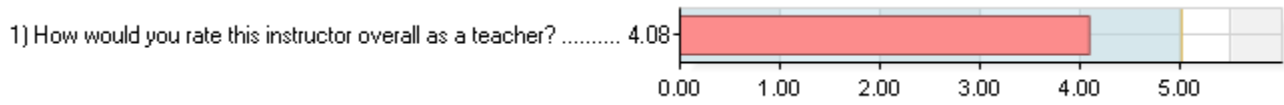
How would you rate this course overall?



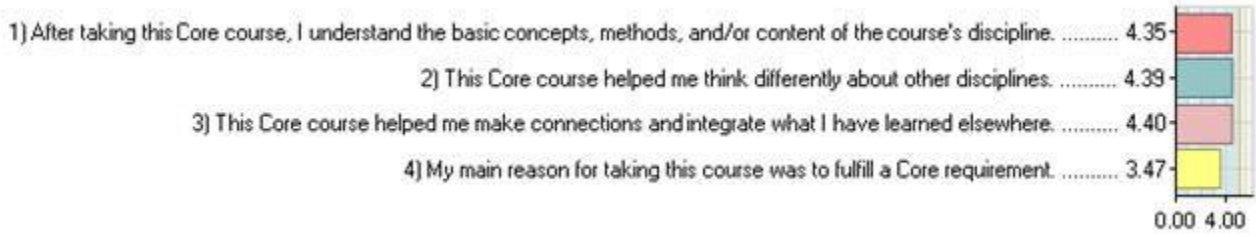
Select your agreement level with the following statements about this instructor.



How would you rate this instructor overall as a teacher?



Core: Select your agreement level with the following statements about this course.



**Core Questions Breakdown by Core Requirement for 2017F
Fall 2016**

Creation Date Tue, Jan 10, 2017



Core Breakdown by Core Requirement - Fall 2016

Core: Select your agreement level with the following statements about this course.

After taking this Core course, I understand the basic concepts, methods, and/or content of the course's discipline.

| | Resp | Mean | Median | SD |
|----------|-------|------|--------|------|
| Overall | 12580 | 4.36 | 5.00 | 0.82 |
| | 0 | NRP | NRP | NRP |
| ART | 909 | 4.31 | 5.00 | 0.93 |
| HIST | 1700 | 4.36 | 4.00 | 0.75 |
| LIT | 753 | 4.41 | 5.00 | 0.77 |
| MATH | 1321 | 4.14 | 4.00 | 1.00 |
| NS | 1644 | 4.08 | 4.00 | 0.94 |
| PHIL | 1506 | 4.46 | 5.00 | 0.70 |
| PHILTHEO | 540 | 4.55 | 5.00 | 0.62 |
| SS | 2402 | 4.46 | 5.00 | 0.76 |
| THEO | 1043 | 4.38 | 5.00 | 0.78 |
| WRT | 762 | 4.50 | 5.00 | 0.66 |

This Core course helped me think differently about other disciplines.

| | Resp | Mean | Median | SD |
|----------|-------|------|--------|------|
| Overall | 12500 | 4.05 | 4.00 | 1.06 |
| | 0 | NRP | NRP | NRP |
| ART | 900 | 3.87 | 4.00 | 1.17 |
| HIST | 1690 | 3.95 | 4.00 | 1.05 |
| LIT | 745 | 4.13 | 4.00 | 0.99 |
| MATH | 1309 | 3.52 | 4.00 | 1.20 |
| NS | 1629 | 3.58 | 4.00 | 1.14 |
| PHIL | 1500 | 4.37 | 5.00 | 0.85 |
| PHILTHEO | 537 | 4.49 | 5.00 | 0.78 |
| SS | 2390 | 4.26 | 4.00 | 0.90 |
| THEO | 1041 | 4.21 | 4.00 | 0.95 |
| WRT | 759 | 4.10 | 4.00 | 0.98 |

This Core course helped me make connections and integrate what I have learned elsewhere.

| | Resp | Mean | Median | SD |
|---------|-------|------|--------|------|
| Overall | 12452 | 4.13 | 4.00 | 1.03 |
| | 0 | NRP | NRP | NRP |
| ART | 901 | 3.92 | 4.00 | 1.15 |
| HIST | 1692 | 4.08 | 4.00 | 0.99 |
| LIT | 744 | 4.24 | 4.00 | 0.91 |
| MATH | 1304 | 3.61 | 4.00 | 1.21 |
| NS | 1620 | 3.66 | 4.00 | 1.14 |

| SD | Resp | Mean | Median |
|----------|------|------|--------|
| PHIL | 1490 | 4.39 | 5.00 |
| PHILTHEO | 536 | 4.53 | 5.00 |
| SS | 2379 | 4.34 | 5.00 |
| THEO | 1032 | 4.26 | 4.00 |
| WRT | 754 | 4.29 | 4.00 |

My main reason for taking this course was to fulfill a Core requirement.

| | Resp | Mean | Median | SD |
|----------|-------|------|--------|------|
| Overall | 12416 | 4.10 | 5.00 | 1.28 |
| | 0 | NRP | NRP | NRP |
| ART | 900 | 4.02 | 5.00 | 1.31 |
| HIST | 1682 | 4.47 | 5.00 | 0.87 |
| LIT | 741 | 4.34 | 5.00 | 1.01 |
| MATH | 1297 | 3.90 | 4.00 | 1.33 |
| NS | 1623 | 3.76 | 4.00 | 1.46 |
| PHIL | 1488 | 4.34 | 5.00 | 0.95 |
| PHILTHEO | 537 | 4.06 | 4.00 | 1.17 |
| SS | 2359 | 3.20 | 4.00 | 1.47 |
| THEO | 1032 | 4.55 | 5.00 | 0.80 |
| WRT | 757 | 4.37 | 5.00 | 0.92 |

Core Overall Summary - Spring 2017**Spring 2017**

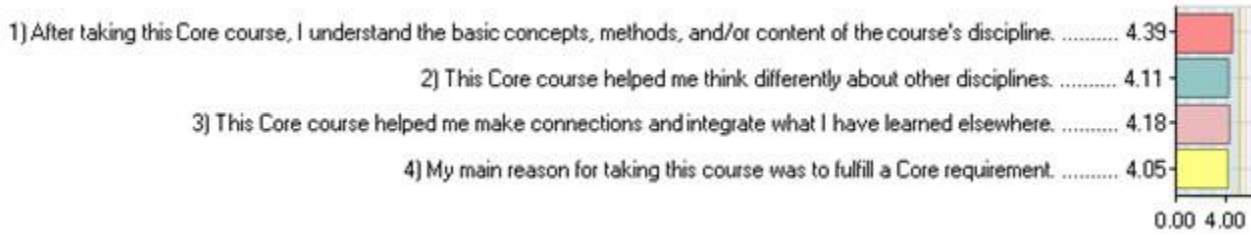
Project Audience 13000
Responses Received 11299
Response Ratio 86.92%

Creation Date Thu, Jun 08, 2017

Core Survey Questions for All Core Courses

| Raters | Students |
|----------------|----------|
| Responded | 11299 |
| Invited | 13000 |
| Response Ratio | 86.92% |

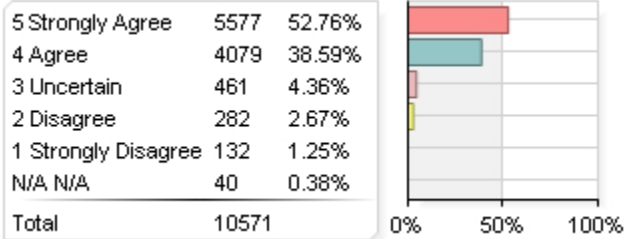
Core: Select your agreement level with the following statements about this course.



Core: Select your agreement level with the following statements about this course.

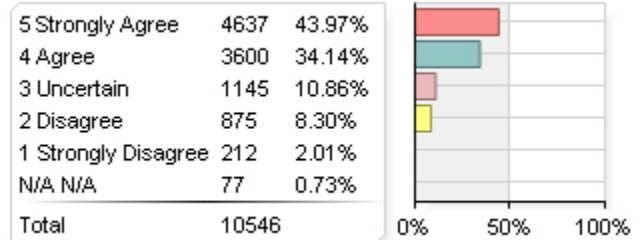
| Competency Statistics | Value |
|-----------------------|-------|
| Mean | 4.18 |
| Median | 4.00 |
| Mode | 5 |
| Standard Deviation | 1.04 |

1. After taking this Core course, I understand the basic concepts, methods, and/or content of the course's discipline.



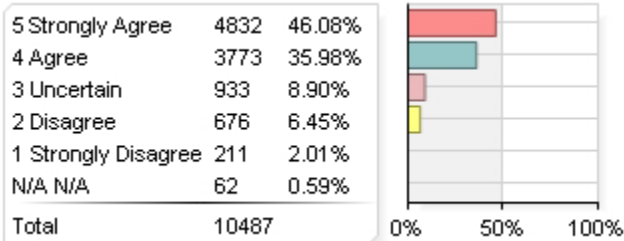
| Statistics | Value |
|--------------------|-------|
| Response Count | 10571 |
| Mean | 4.39 |
| Median | 5.00 |
| Standard Deviation | 0.80 |

2. This Core course helped me think differently about other disciplines.



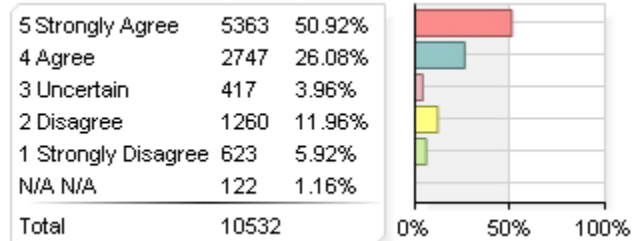
| Statistics | Value |
|--------------------|-------|
| Response Count | 10546 |
| Mean | 4.11 |
| Median | 4.00 |
| Standard Deviation | 1.03 |

3. This Core course helped me make connections and integrate what I have learned elsewhere.



| Statistics | Value |
|--------------------|-------|
| Response Count | 10487 |
| Mean | 4.18 |
| Median | 4.00 |
| Standard Deviation | 0.98 |

4. My main reason for taking this course was to fulfill a Core requirement.



| Statistics | Value |
|--------------------|-------|
| Response Count | 10532 |
| Mean | 4.05 |
| Median | 5.00 |
| Standard Deviation | 1.26 |

Core Pilot Overall Summary - Spring 2017**Spring 2017**

Project Audience 378

Responses Received 313

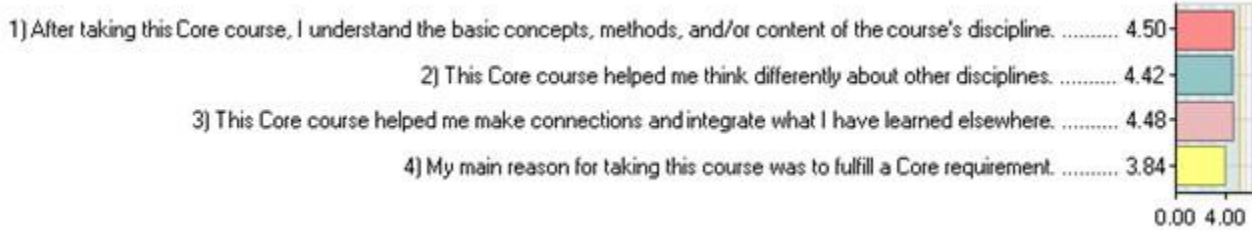
Response Ratio 82.80%

Creation Date Thu, Jun 08, 2017

Core Survey Questions for All Core Courses

| Raters | Students |
|----------------|----------|
| Responded | 313 |
| Invited | 378 |
| Response Ratio | 82.80% |

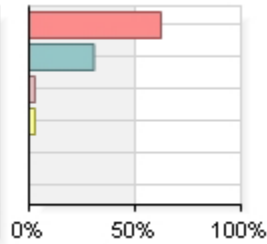
Core: Select your agreement level with the following statements about this course.



Core: Select your agreement level with the following statements about this course.

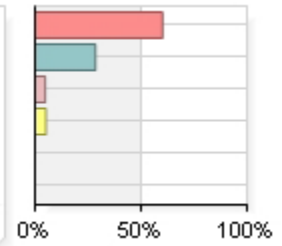
1. After taking this Core course, I understand the basic concepts, methods, and/or content of the course's discipline.

| | | |
|---------------------|------------|--------|
| 5 Strongly Agree | 181 | 62.20% |
| 4 Agree | 89 | 30.58% |
| 3 Uncertain | 8 | 2.75% |
| 2 Disagree | 8 | 2.75% |
| 1 Strongly Disagree | 4 | 1.37% |
| N/A N/A | 1 | 0.34% |
| Total | 291 | |



2. This Core course helped me think differently about other disciplines.

| | | |
|---------------------|------------|--------|
| 5 Strongly Agree | 175 | 60.14% |
| 4 Agree | 83 | 28.52% |
| 3 Uncertain | 14 | 4.81% |
| 2 Disagree | 15 | 5.15% |
| 1 Strongly Disagree | 3 | 1.03% |
| N/A N/A | 1 | 0.34% |
| Total | 291 | |

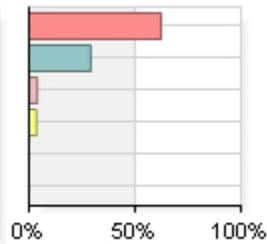


| Statistics | Value |
|--------------------|-------|
| Response Count | 291 |
| Mean | 4.50 |
| Median | 5.00 |
| Standard Deviation | 0.80 |

| Statistics | Value |
|--------------------|-------|
| Response Count | 291 |
| Mean | 4.42 |
| Median | 5.00 |
| Standard Deviation | 0.88 |

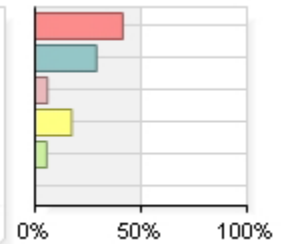
3. This Core course helped me make connections and integrate what I have learned elsewhere.

| | | |
|---------------------|------------|--------|
| 5 Strongly Agree | 178 | 62.24% |
| 4 Agree | 83 | 29.02% |
| 3 Uncertain | 11 | 3.85% |
| 2 Disagree | 10 | 3.50% |
| 1 Strongly Disagree | 3 | 1.05% |
| N/A N/A | 1 | 0.35% |
| Total | 286 | |



4. My main reason for taking this course was to fulfill a Core requirement.

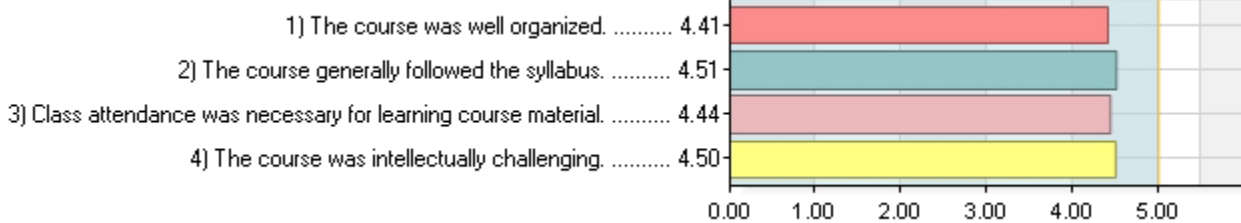
| | | |
|---------------------|------------|--------|
| 5 Strongly Agree | 120 | 41.38% |
| 4 Agree | 84 | 28.97% |
| 3 Uncertain | 17 | 5.86% |
| 2 Disagree | 50 | 17.24% |
| 1 Strongly Disagree | 16 | 5.52% |
| N/A N/A | 3 | 1.03% |
| Total | 290 | |



| Statistics | Value |
|--------------------|-------|
| Response Count | 286 |
| Mean | 4.48 |
| Median | 5.00 |
| Standard Deviation | 0.82 |

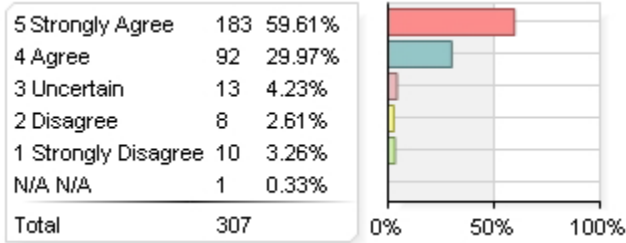
| Statistics | Value |
|--------------------|-------|
| Response Count | 290 |
| Mean | 3.84 |
| Median | 4.00 |
| Standard Deviation | 1.29 |

Standard Survey Select your agreement level with the following statements about this course.

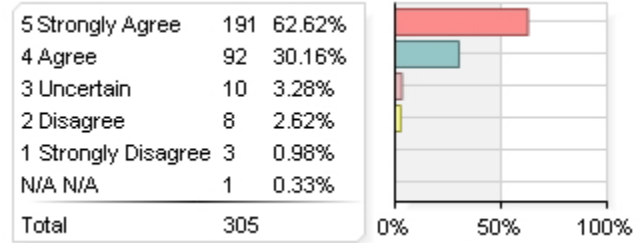


Select your agreement level with the following statements about this course.

1. The course was well organized.



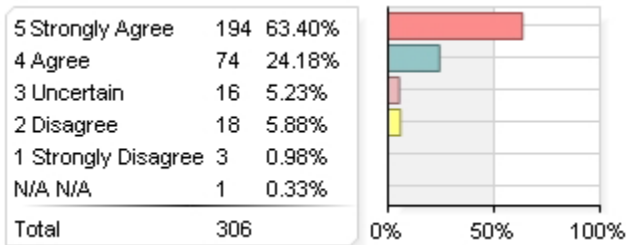
2. The course generally followed the syllabus.



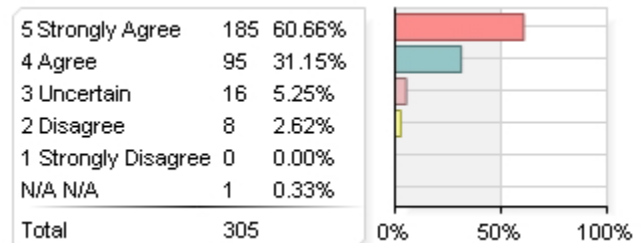
| Statistics | Value |
|--------------------|-------|
| Response Count | 307 |
| Mean | 4.41 |
| Median | 5.00 |
| Standard Deviation | 0.94 |

| Statistics | Value |
|--------------------|-------|
| Response Count | 305 |
| Mean | 4.51 |
| Median | 5.00 |
| Standard Deviation | 0.77 |

3. Class attendance was necessary for learning course material.



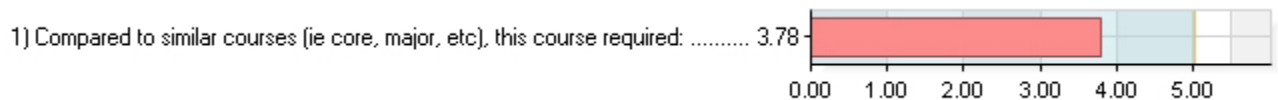
4. The course was intellectually challenging.



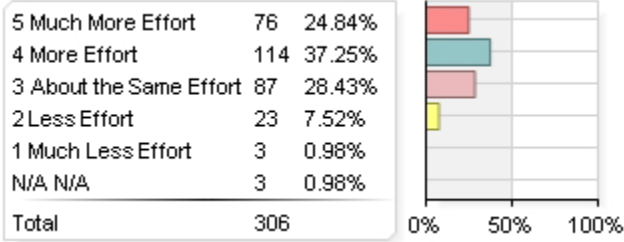
| Statistics | Value |
|--------------------|-------|
| Response Count | 306 |
| Mean | 4.44 |
| Median | 5.00 |
| Standard Deviation | 0.91 |

| Statistics | Value |
|--------------------|-------|
| Response Count | 305 |
| Mean | 4.50 |
| Median | 5.00 |
| Standard Deviation | 0.72 |

Compared to similar courses (ie core, major, etc), this course required:

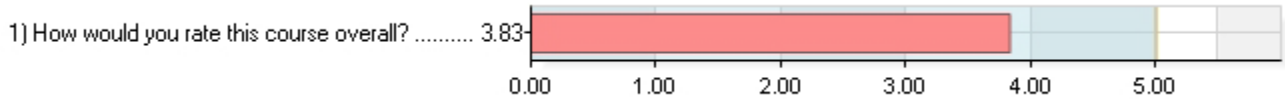


Compared to similar courses (ie core, major, etc), this course required:

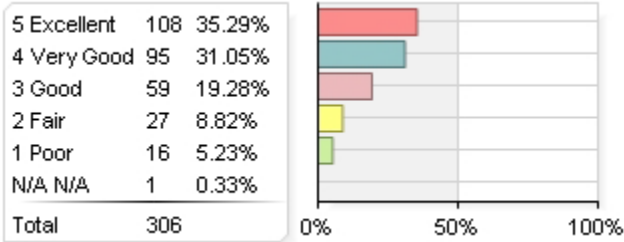


| Statistics | Value |
|--------------------|-------|
| Response Count | 306 |
| Mean | 3.78 |
| Median | 4.00 |
| Standard Deviation | 0.94 |

How would you rate this course overall?



How would you rate this course overall?



| Statistics | Value |
|--------------------|-------|
| Response Count | 306 |
| Mean | 3.83 |
| Median | 4.00 |
| Standard Deviation | 1.16 |

Core Questions Breakdown by Core Requirement - Spring 2017 for 2017S
Spring 2017

Creation Date Thu, Jun 08, 2017



Core Breakdown by Core Requirement - Spring 2017

Core: Select your agreement level with the following statements about this course.

After taking this Core course, I understand the basic concepts, methods, and/or content of the course's discipline.

| | Resp | Mean | Median | SD |
|----------|-------|------|--------|------|
| Overall | 10531 | 4.43 | 5.00 | 0.80 |
| | 0 | NRP | NRP | NRP |
| ART | 763 | 4.51 | 5.00 | 0.68 |
| HIST | 1633 | 4.44 | 5.00 | 0.74 |
| LIT | 675 | 4.40 | 5.00 | 0.79 |
| MATH | 603 | 4.29 | 4.00 | 0.86 |
| NS | 1535 | 4.07 | 4.00 | 1.00 |
| PHIL | 1067 | 4.54 | 5.00 | 0.64 |
| PHILTHEO | 814 | 4.64 | 5.00 | 0.55 |
| SS | 1980 | 4.33 | 4.00 | 0.81 |
| THEO | 984 | 4.50 | 5.00 | 0.78 |
| WRT | 477 | 4.56 | 5.00 | 0.65 |

This Core course helped me think differently about other disciplines.

| | Resp | Mean | Median | SD |
|----------|-------|------|--------|------|
| Overall | 10469 | 4.12 | 4.00 | 1.03 |
| | 0 | NRP | NRP | NRP |
| ART | 756 | 4.08 | 4.00 | 1.03 |
| HIST | 1626 | 4.09 | 4.00 | 0.99 |
| LIT | 675 | 4.09 | 4.00 | 1.02 |
| MATH | 591 | 3.65 | 4.00 | 1.14 |
| NS | 1525 | 3.64 | 4.00 | 1.20 |
| PHIL | 1064 | 4.44 | 5.00 | 0.75 |
| PHILTHEO | 809 | 4.60 | 5.00 | 0.69 |
| SS | 1971 | 4.10 | 4.00 | 0.97 |
| THEO | 977 | 4.36 | 5.00 | 0.92 |
| WRT | 475 | 4.20 | 4.00 | 1.00 |

This Core course helped me make connections and integrate what I have learned elsewhere.

| | Resp | Mean | Median | SD |
|---------|-------|------|--------|------|
| Overall | 10425 | 4.20 | 4.00 | 0.98 |
| | 0 | NRP | NRP | NRP |
| ART | 756 | 4.10 | 4.00 | 1.03 |
| HIST | 1623 | 4.23 | 4.00 | 0.91 |
| LIT | 670 | 4.16 | 4.00 | 0.98 |
| MATH | 594 | 3.78 | 4.00 | 1.09 |

| | Resp | Mean | Median | SD |
|----------|------|------|--------|------|
| NS | 1511 | 3.71 | 4.00 | 1.18 |
| PHIL | 1052 | 4.43 | 5.00 | 0.77 |
| PHILTHEO | 809 | 4.64 | 5.00 | 0.65 |
| SS | 1958 | 4.20 | 4.00 | 0.90 |
| THEO | 976 | 4.39 | 5.00 | 0.91 |
| WRT | 476 | 4.36 | 5.00 | 0.86 |

My main reason for taking this course was to fulfill a Core requirement.

| | Resp | Mean | Median | SD |
|----------|-------|------|--------|------|
| Overall | 10410 | 4.15 | 5.00 | 1.26 |
| | 0 | NRP | NRP | NRP |
| ART | 750 | 4.09 | 5.00 | 1.26 |
| HIST | 1621 | 4.47 | 5.00 | 0.85 |
| LIT | 672 | 4.35 | 5.00 | 1.02 |
| MATH | 590 | 3.83 | 4.00 | 1.34 |
| NS | 1519 | 3.86 | 4.00 | 1.42 |
| PHIL | 1057 | 4.44 | 5.00 | 0.87 |
| PHILTHEO | 809 | 4.01 | 4.00 | 1.20 |
| SS | 1940 | 3.22 | 4.00 | 1.46 |
| THEO | 977 | 4.57 | 5.00 | 0.77 |
| WRT | 475 | 4.63 | 5.00 | 0.68 |

2016–2017 UCRC Members

Robert Bartlett (Political Science)
 Julian Bourg (MCAS Dean's Office/History)
 Patrick Byrne (Philosophy)
 Dawei Chen (Mathematics)
 Sean Clarke (Connell School)
 Mary Crane (English)
 Brian Gareau (Sociology)
 Lisa Goodman (Lynch School) (fall '16)/Elida Laski (Lynch School) (spring '16)
 Gail Kineke (Earth and Environmental Sciences)
 Richard McGowan, S.J. (Carroll School)
 Franco Mormando (Romance Language and Literature)
 Stephen Pope (Theology)
 John Rakestraw (Center for Teaching Excellence)
 Ginny Reinburg (History)
 Akua Sarr (Provost's Office)
 Aiden Clarke, '19

Core Renewal Subcommittee

Mary Crane
 Brian Gareau
 Gail Kineke

Assessment Subcommittee

Patrick Byrne
 Richard McGowan/Franco Mormando
 John Rakestraw

Curriculum Subcommittee

Dawei Chen
 Ginny Reinburg
 Lisa Goodman/Elida Laski

UCRC Meeting
 Monday, September 19, 2016
 10:30 a.m., Gasson 105

Attendees:

Robert Bartlett; Julian Bourg; Patrick Byrne; Aiden Clarke; Sean Clarke; Mary Crane; Brian Gareau; Lisa Goodman; Elizabeth Hostetler; Charles Keenan; Richard McGowan, S.J.; Franco Mormando; Stephen Pope; John Rakestraw; Virginia Reinburg; Akua Sarr

All 2016-2017 University Core Renewal Committee members were introduced, and those appointed to the Assessment, Curricular, and Core Renewal subcommittees were announced.

A calendar of upcoming deadlines and important dates for the Core Curriculum was circulated. Over the summer Dean Gregory Kalschur, S.J., approved the revised Core requirement descriptions the UCRC approved last year with only minor changes. Going forward the Curricular subcommittee will refer to the revised descriptions when reviewing course proposals.

Core Renewal courses were discussed, beginning with lower registration totals than expected for fall 2016 courses. With the help of the Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment, surveys of freshmen are now being conducted to better understand how incoming students think about their schedules and how to more effectively market Core Renewal classes. It was noted that some marketing techniques employed in 2015-16 were not used this year (a letter to parents from Dean Kalschur was not sent until the final registration session), and it was suggested to continue marketing the pilot courses aggressively. It was suggested to make these classes seem more desirable by emphasizing the limited seats available in them. The presence of some upperclassmen in this fall's Complex Problems courses was announced, and the possibility of other integrated Core experiences for upperclassmen was mentioned.

Other announcements were made including the idea for a three-year postdoctoral fellowship in the natural sciences, directed toward individuals seeking to teach in a liberal arts setting and who would be selected by an interdisciplinary hiring committee. Low interest in Core Pedagogical Grants offered last year was noted; they will likely not be offered in the future.

A call for proposals for courses on the theme of "Difference, Justice, and the Common Good" was announced. Such courses – whether new or previously-taught – would be taught in AY2017-18 and fulfill the Cultural Diversity Core requirement, and faculty teaching them would be given \$3,500 to participate in a series of pedagogical workshops and working groups during Spring 2017. This call seeks to create a wider breadth of classes that fulfill the Cultural Diversity requirement. It was suggested to clarify the Call for Proposals on certain details. There was also concern that some faculty may feel uncomfortable teaching with a view toward "God's love, mercy, and justice" as stated in

the proposal. Suggestions were made to address this issue including sharing specific texts or matching professors with colleagues with more experience in this area.

Comments were solicited on the 2016 State of the Core report, which had been pre-circulated to committee members. There is still confusion over the reflection component in some of the pilot courses, and it was added that having reflection sessions in the evening can be problematic for faculty who are parents. The small percentage of Core classes taught by ranked faculty was noted as a disadvantage for students, although nearly all Core Renewal pilot classes are being taught by full-time faculty. A suggestion was made that faculty be anonymously polled to measure their opinions about the Core and Core Renewal. A question was raised about how to encourage faculty engagement with the Core. Incentives for new or younger faculty members would be advantageous, including buy-outs from departments or only requiring newly-hired faculty to teach one Core course per year. Discussion with other integrated Core programs such as PULSE and Perspectives has been ongoing.

Questions were raised up regarding the assessment of Core Renewal courses. Currently only indirect assessment (self-reported data via surveys and focus groups) has been collected, and it was asked how direct assessment might be implemented. It was mentioned that in PULSE, papers are chosen at random and examined for their quality, although this is a time- and labor-intensive process. Suggestions also included reaching out to the Educational Research, Measurement, and Evaluation department in the Lynch school to learn more.

Lastly, the topic of what faculty should know before teaching Core Renewal pilot courses was discussed. It was mentioned in the State of the Core Report that at times last year, students brought up topics in reflection which professors were not used to handling. It was stated that faculty need to be educated on what to expect in these classes and the amount of time required to teach them, as well as clarity on what “reflection” means in this context. The purpose of reflection should be to connect students’ experience in the classroom to their lives outside of it, and faculty should be encouraged to build on the strengths of the BC community using non-academic staff during reflections. Furthermore, reflection should not be an extension of class time but distinct from it. As examples from last year demonstrate, having upperclassmen serve as “POD” leaders was advantageous, while showing films was less effective.

UCRC Meeting
 Monday, October 24, 2016
 10:30 a.m., Gasson 105

Attendees:

Robert Bartlett; Julian Bourg; Patrick Byrne; Aiden Clarke; Sean Clarke; Dawei Chen; Mary Crane; Brian Gareau; Lisa Goodman; Elizabeth Hostetler; Charles Keenan; Gail Kineke; Richard McGowan, S.J.; Stephen Pope; Virginia Reinburg; Akua Sarr

Several announcements were made to open the meeting. Twenty faculty proposals were received for the “Difference, Justice, and the Common Good in the United States” initiative, aimed at increasing the number of Cultural Diversity courses focused on the U.S. during the academic year 2017-18. The Task Force charged with re-examining the Cultural Diversity requirement will review these applications. In addition, the NEASC self-study is in its penultimate draft, with Core Renewal as one of five special designations. The decisions of the Curricular subcommittee regarding faculty applications for Core credit for given courses (which had been pre-circulated) were also announced.

A list of 2017-2018 Core Renewal Pilot Course applications was distributed, showing those that the Renewal subcommittee had recommended be approved, sent back for revisions, or rejected. A motion for the UCRC’s approval of those decisions was introduced and passed unanimously by a committee vote. The next step for the newly-approved Core Renewal courses will be more detailed development of syllabi and course descriptions. Comments were made regarding the need for the presentation and promotion of these courses to freshmen through engaging titles and marketing. The Office of the Associate Dean for the Core will move forward scheduling the Core pilot courses for the 2017-2018 academic year.

A potential UCRC recommendation to the MCAS Promotion and Tenure Committee was then discussed. This recommendation urges that committee to take into consideration the intricacies of teaching Core Renewal courses, especially in regard to team-teaching and interdisciplinary. Pre-tenure faculty ought to receive special recognition for contributing to Core Renewal, which is a university priority. Committee members also suggested emphasizing the interdisciplinary aspect of Core Renewal and including the language of “risks” to the note. With these two additions, a motion to approve the recommendation to the MCAS Promotion and Tenure Committee was introduced and unanimously approved.

Finally, the committee discussed a proposal from the Computer Science department to revisit the Mathematics Core requirement, including the possibility of changing its name to a “Quantitative Reasoning” requirement instead of “Mathematics.” It was noted that this is a larger structural issue in how Core courses are offered, either through a single department (Mathematics Core is almost exclusively offered through the Mathematics Department) versus through a variety of departments (as in the Core requirements for Literature, Social Sciences, and Natural Sciences). Concerns regarding this issue involved adequate faculty staffing and the desire for more tenure-line faculty to be teaching Core courses, as well as the need to deliberately teach non-majors. The opinion

was shared that there is a need for more Math Core courses catering to non-math majors that are broader and more holistic, as well as interdisciplinary. According to student responses in c. 2012/2013 (when Core Renewal was underway), students desired computer science courses for non-majors. Concern about the Mathematics department requiring a certain rigor from classes counting towards Math Core was mentioned in conversation with the desire of non-math-major students wanting a less rigorous option to gain Mathematics Core credit.

This led to a discussion on the overall structure of Core, and whether Core courses should be taught as an introduction to the major or, instead, as introductions for non-majors in the spirit of a general liberal arts education. Because departments are currently evaluated based on the number of students in their major, incentives might be needed for departments to offer Core classes intended for non-majors. The question was also raised whether Core classes could be offered to students beyond the freshmen year – i.e., for juniors and seniors – who may be more capable of taking rigorous classes.

The discussion concluded with a call for more detailed information on how the Computer Science courses named in the proposal will meet the requirements of the Mathematics Core (as it is currently constructed) before any decisions are made. The Office of the Associate Dean for the Core will continue discussions with both the Mathematics department and Computer Science department.

UCRC Meeting
 Monday, December 5, 2016
 10:30 a.m., Gasson 105

Attendees:

Franco Mormando; Julian Bourg; Patrick Byrne; Aiden Clarke; Sean Clarke; Brian Gareau; Lisa Goodman; Elizabeth Hostetler; Gail Kineke; Richard McGowan, S.J.; Stephen Pope; Virginia Reinburg; Akua Sarr

The meeting began with announcements concerning the Core Renewal pilot courses. The Fall 2016 evaluations will include additional questions for students and faculty pertaining to the role of reflection in the courses. There is an opportunity for reflection-focused workshops in the future for faculty to more deeply consider what this aspect of renewal classes looks like. Enrollment issues for Fall 2016 and Spring 2017 renewal courses was mentioned. Because seats were not completely filled by freshman, these classes have been opened to some sophomores and juniors. Concerns about the UIS system were voiced. Suggestions for looking into the possibility of using automatic enrollment into multiple course components were made. Misinformation about the courses and limits on who can take them and how many has been noted and pinpointed as an area to work on by collaborating with advisors, Student Services, and others in order to clarify this misunderstanding. It was noted that theater seats are not being filled and less seats should be offered in these classes in the future.

An announcement about the faculty retreat for Core Renewal courses will take place in the spring. This retreat is open to past pilot faculty and will be an opportunity to work on pedagogy discussion and writing. A reminder will be sent out soon. Additionally there will be a meeting this month with the faculty of the new pilots for the 2017-2018 year. Workshops for this group will take place in the spring.

It was mentioned that there has been conversation on the possibility of hiring four postdocs in order to teach pilot courses. This would help with the teaching load while offering a sought after humanities style postdoc program. It was suggested similar programs at other universities be researched in order to consider the possibilities for putting a program together at BC.

A comment about the philosophy and theology pilot courses was made, in that the current requirement for continuity needs to be more deeply considered with how this works with core. It was suggested that a more frank conversation about this concern take place in terms of Core Pilot sustainability.

Next, discussion turned to the Difference, Justice, and the Common Good initiative. Again it was mentioned there has been some misunderstanding related to Cultural Diversity Core and the fact CD credit can be given in addition to major/minor/elective/core credit. There will be Difference, Justice, and the Common Good workshops in spring in order to further discuss this topic and allow

faculty who will be teaching these classes to engage in conversation together. In order to help facilitate conversation about these themes, it was suggested there be more collaboration across the university in terms of being aware of speakers, conversations, and other events. Making more use of the University Calendar was recommended as one way of doing this. The idea of hiring a Graduate Assistant or part-time staffer in order to handle DJ&CG initiatives on campus was discussed. Thoughts were shared that a part-time staffer may be a better alternative due to more commitment to the cause and a larger opportunity for connection to BC staff and happenings on campus because they would be in longer term position. Suggestions for more proactively finding classes and faculty for DJ&CG in the future were made.

An update on the Computer Science proposal for CSCI1101 credit as Math Core, as well as amending the Mathematics Core requirement was made. The Curriculum Subcommittee will discuss CSCI1101 as counting for Math Core. Concerning the argument of moving from a Mathematics Core to a more general Quantitative Reasoning/Computational Science Core; discussion revolved about how this might have a larger impact (a change in the number of seats filled through Math for example). There was agreement that the inclusion of other classes such as, statistics (through Nursing, Psychology, Sociology, etc.), as well as logic courses through philosophy; may offer good alternatives to Ideas in Math and Finite Math that many current non-math majors take for the Math Core requirement. Similar to last meeting, the idea that Core classes should be integrated and true to the goals of Core Renewal, rather than being just an introduction to the major were shared. It was suggested that Computer Science may want to consider proposing a Core Renewal course in order to develop a Math Core course that is engaging and integrated. It was also suggested that looking into the Math/Quantitative requirements at other schools would be worthwhile as this discussion goes forward.

Finally, a discussion on the sustainability of Renewed Core was held. There was a call for more integrated science, especially in regards to Complex Problems and Enduring Questions classes. Comments were made about the possibility of using Renewed Core classes as marketing opportunities for new students in that these classes are special to BC and allow for students to explore areas outside their main areas of interest while opening their mind to bigger real world ideas. Renewal classes were discussed as needing to connect text to real life, be an opportunity for more personal experience and connection between faculty (especially more tenured faculty) and freshman students through smaller classes, and be offered great options for freshman students instead of requirements that they have to check off. It was suggested to approach endowed chairs with the option to teach Renewal courses, offer incentives for more faculty to teach Renewal courses, and offer more Renewal courses that are less credit intensive for students with already full schedules. Questions about the Core's definitions of interdisciplinary, integrated, being distinctive, engagement, transformative, and reflection were raised. Thoughts about how the Core adds to the experience of Boston College students (with particular attention to freshman) compared to other schools were discussed. There

was a call for a more unified view of developing thoughtful morally responsible adults in a democratic society as an institutional priority that is part of the broader comprehensive education students receive at Boston College.

UCRC Meeting
 Monday, February 6, 2017
 10:30 a.m., Gasson 105

Attendees:

Robert Bartlett; Julian Bourg; Patrick Byrne; Dawei Chen; Aiden Clarke; Sean Clarke; Mary Crane; Brian Gareau; Elizabeth Hostetler; Charles Keenan; Gail Kineke; Elida Laski; Franco Mormando; Stephen Pope; John Rakestraw; Virginia Reinburg; Akua Sarr;

Announcements and updates were made concerning the possibility of changing the mathematics Core requirement to a quantitative reasoning requirement. Conversations about this topic will continue with other members of the university. Comment were made about the importance of staying true to the initial, interdisciplinary intention of Core requirements and ensuring that any changes acknowledge that intention. Additional announcements included workshops for faculty teaching Difference, Justice, and Common Good courses next year, the upcoming Core Renewal faculty retreat, and the hiring of postdocs to be involved in Core Renewal teaching for the 2017-2018 year.

Current enrollment trends in Core Renewal classes were discussed. It was noted that faculty often draw students from their respective colleges and majors, and that students in professional schools have a difficult time scheduling classes given their more structured plan of studies. It was suggested that there be more courses with requirements that are not being fulfilled in their major. For example, CSOM students fill their Social Science requirement through required economics courses, so they may be less interested in Core Renewal courses that meet Social Science requirements. It was noted that more females have enrolled in Core Renewal courses than males, and it was recommended that this development be examined further. Many felt that more promotion of these courses is needed in general, especially via social media. The role of Orientation Leaders was discussed as a significant part of how freshman choose classes. It was suggested to look into the training process for OL's to better inform them about Core Renewal courses and how to promote them, as well as to work with the Office of First Year Experience to encourage the selection of OL's who have taken Core Renewal courses and who understand the importance of an interdisciplinary education. It was also discussed how the faculty summer advisors are chosen and if there is an opportunity to better train these staff to push Core Renewal courses as well.

Next, the sustainability of Core Renewal Pilots was discussed. New questions administered as part of student evaluations about the role of religion and faith in these courses as well as the integration of reflection sessions revealed that some classes do a better job than others of incorporating reflection sessions into the course content as well as explicitly addressing religious concerns. It was suggested that perhaps Theology faculty, who have more experience regarding reflection, be made available to those teaching these classes. The need for more training in how to hold reflection sections was also noted. When considering why certain students did not enroll in Core Renewal courses, it was noted that many had difficulty in the process of registration, especially when there were multiple components involved (lab sections, for instance). Some

students are already fulfilling Core requirements through Advanced Placement credit, study abroad courses, or major requirements. It was noted that many students plan to fulfill their Arts Core abroad, and thus may be unlikely to enroll in a Core Renewal course that fulfills that requirement. Nevertheless, other evidence demonstrates that students will still take Core Renewal courses if they are interesting enough, even if they have already fulfilled the Core requirements involved.

General findings from student evaluations on Core courses were then reported. The mean of the evaluations were positive and most students feel that they come away with an understanding of the course's content and an ability to integrate material. Most Core classes are still taken to fulfill a given Core requirement. It was suggested there could be more done in these classes to promote integration between different disciplines, especially in science and math courses. Evaluation scores were slightly lower in math and the natural science courses than the social sciences, which might reflect a difference in how those courses are being taught. Possible remedies were proposed, including workshops or a meeting to discuss teaching in a way that promotes more disciplinary integration. It was noted that in Core Renewal courses, fewer students enrolled simply to fulfill Core requirements.

Finally, there was a call for a new term to refer to the interdisciplinary programs unique to Boston College, including Pulse, Perspectives, Honors, and the Core Renewal courses. As a potential new name for the pilot classes, "Connections" was well-received, and it was suggested the word "Core" be omitted from the new name so the courses are not negatively regarded as being related to "requirements." It was noted that the Center for Teaching Excellence would like to hear what faculty want or need in order to better teach Core Renewal courses. The prospect of some Core Renewal courses being required as a part of an interdisciplinary program like International Studies was also mentioned, which is an approach that could also be incorporated in certain minors. It was noted that there may be some difficulty in attracting pre-med students or students majoring in the sciences to these courses, but that also presents an opportunity to create courses targeted to those specific groups. The idea of offering multiple sections of single Renewal class was also proposed. An English Language Learner Core Renewal course will be taught next year as a way to address a specialty population, there may be an opportunity for similar courses of this type in the future.

UCRC Meeting
March 13, 2017
10:30 a.m., Gasson 105

Attendees:

Robert Bartlett; Julian Bourg; Patrick Byrne; Dawei Chen; Aiden Clarke; Sean Clarke; Mary Crane; Brian Gareau; Charles Keenan; Gail Kineke; Elida Laski; Franco Mormando; Stephen Pope; John Rakestraw; Virginia Reinburg; Akua Sarr

The meeting began with an update from the Curriculum subcommittee, which recently met and approved seven courses for Core credit. Four applications were rejected, and two more faculty were asked to revise and resubmit their proposals.

Discussion then turned to two documents that had been prepared for the NEASC accreditation visit: “Standard Four: The Academic Program,” which included a section on General Education; and a “Special Attention Paper” on the Core Curriculum. Questions and comments were solicited. Committee members discussed the issue of Advanced Placement being used to fulfill Core requirements, expressing doubt that high school courses would be equivalent to the distinctive approach and pedagogy of BC classes. Several alternatives to the current system were proposed, ranging from refusing AP credit altogether to allowing AP credit to count as elective credit toward graduation but not toward Core requirements. It was noted that some departments, such as those in the the natural sciences, appreciate the flexibility AP affords their majors to move past introductory-level courses. It was suggested the Admissions office be brought into this conversation to see how policy changes regarding AP credit might affect applications. Regarding the Special Attention Paper, it was suggested that descriptions of Complex Problems and Enduring Questions courses be clarified, and that more attention be paid to the lab sections as distinctive components of Complex Problems courses.

Next, the most recent draft of the sustainability plan for Core Renewal was discussed, and it was noted that the Provost and Dean of the Morrissey College will attend the next UCRC meeting to discuss that document. Several revisions were suggested: first, that the statement that more staff are needed to support Core Renewal courses be moved earlier in the document and highlighted as a programmatic priority; and second, that a new section be added regarding the recruitment and training of faculty. It was noted that assessment needs to be ongoing for Core Renewal to succeed. IRPA feedback and course evaluations should be analyzed to determine what makes for a successful (and unsuccessful) course, and feedback should be solicited from students both during and after their first year at BC.

UCRC Meeting
 May 9th, 2017 10am
 Gasson 105

Attendees:

Julian Bourg; Dawei Chen; Aiden Clarke; Sean Clarke; Mary Crane; Bill Keane; Gail Kineke; Charles Keenan; Elida Laska; Zach Matus; Franco Mormando; John Rakestraw; Virginia Reinburg; Ethan Sullivan

Provost David Quigley and Dean Greg Kalscheur, S.J. attended the final UCRC meeting of 2017–2018 to share their perspectives on Core Renewal and converse with the committee. What are the successes and challenges of Core Renewal after two years of pilot courses? What is the role of the UCRC in managing the Core in general? What are benchmarks, opportunities, and challenges for sustaining Core Renewal in coming years (Core Renewal 2.0)?

The first phase of Core Renewal will come to an end in 2017–2018. A decision on continuing renewal (scale, resources, etc.) will be made by Father Leahy in spring 2018. Core Renewal will continue in some form: it fits with the new Strategic Plan's prioritization of undergraduate liberal arts education. Out of necessity, planning is already underway for Complex Problems and Enduring Questions courses in 2018–2019 (logistics require serious advance preparation especially for matchmaking). Core Renewal has impacted faculty culture, bringing energy and building relationships among colleagues, and it has advanced self-reflection on pedagogy and preparation of syllabi. One goal remains continuing to renew the Core and curriculum through gradual innovation and careful, intention planning that involves evaluation and evidence; small changes are enlivening the Core and there is not question of any sudden, large-scale overhauls. The collection of data and assessment information on renewal classes is extremely useful and a positive process. One possible model of sustainability is to present unique, integrative, reflective academic experiences available to first-year students, experiences that are unique to BC and that combine the best of existing programs as well as new initiatives. Questions remain: Would every BC student be required to take one of these courses? Would it be enough to ensure that adequate seats are available (~2300 first-year students taking Complex Problems, Enduring Questions, Portico, Perspectives, Pulse, Courage to Know, Freshman Topic Seminars)? In what way could they be presented as “signature courses” to prospective and entering students, parents, alumni, donors, the public, etc.? Moving forward, will it be possible to have Core courses specifically designed for sophomores, juniors, and seniors (e.g., a capstone)? Integration, reflection, and mission are priorities and exceed the specific Core Renewal courses. Challenges of implementation (matchmaking, course scheduling, logistics, etc.) remain.

The question was raised: Would it be possible to develop “snapshot” versions of Core Renewal courses for alumni and parents? For example, an online module or an on-campus mini-course for alumni would provide opportunities for continued academic engagement for the broader BC community. These experiences might take place as a two-day weekend class or four-five day summer course. It would be useful to know if peer

schools sponsor similar programming. The Core office cannot presently take on this additional work since it is at maximum capacity.

It is the responsibility of the UCRC to recommend changes to the Provost concerning Core. The “spirit of renewal” is spreading across campus beyond the pilot courses. Suggestions and proposals are emerging organically from departments and faculty. Ongoing questions need to be addressed concretely with the goal of making recommendations to the Provost. For instance, how should AP credit be handled? Is it possible to limit the use of AP credit to “get rid of Core courses”? Would a certain number of courses be required at BC? If so, what would the impact on Admissions be (e.g., would students go to another school if they could “use” more of their AP to fulfill requirements)? What are peer schools doing?

Looking forward, a number of challenges confront the UCRC. There is inconsistent engagement across departments and colleges with Core Renewal. Factual misunderstandings persist. Consistent communication and understanding of Core across the university remains a priority. It would be helpful to know more how the BC Core is similar to or distinct from general education programs at other universities. Continued assessment is vital since future support of initiatives depend on demonstration that they yield effective and substantive results with students. What has worked well? What has worked less well? What are we learning? What should we do differently? More generally: Is the Core working? How will the integrated sciences and society initiative relate to the Core? Focusing on what and how we teach (substance [“the best of what is known”] and pedagogy) and on formation (critical thinking, developing whole person)—these remains priorities. In coming years the relationship between the UCRC and departments will need to be explored more explicitly.