



**SAINT LOUIS
UNIVERSITY**

— EST. 1818 —

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Dear Members of the SLU Community,

Over the last five years, Saint Louis University has engaged in a curricular invention process with broad participation from faculty, students and staff working together in College- and University-level taskforces and committees. This process has now reached an important milestone: the January 31st release by the University Undergraduate Core Committee of a final University Core Proposal.

This Core Proposal represents a revision of the penultimate Core Proposal released to the SLU community on October 1, 2019. All SLU Colleges and Schools that deliver undergraduate programs were invited to respond to this first iteration of a shared curriculum with a deadline of November 15, 2019. I want to thank each College and School for the detailed and thoughtful consideration you have given to this process. Between November 15th, 2019 and January 31st, 2020, the University Undergraduate Core Committee (UUCC) worked diligently to review each of these responses, using them to address questions, clarify procedures, and modify the structure where needed and/or possible.

Some questions and concerns expressed in these official responses to the October 1st Core Proposal fell outside the purview of the UUCC to address. I would like to take some time to address these questions here.

First, as the UUCC's University Core Proposal makes clear, this is a curriculum that belongs to all of us. Any instructor, from any program, from any SLU College or School, is welcome to submit courses to be considered for inclusion in the University Core. Furthermore, units are encouraged, but not required, to participate in the delivery of our shared Core; submissions will not be mandated of any College, School or Program.

In this same vein, I affirm that just as the Core is a faculty-owned and overseen curriculum, so too do programs, Colleges, and Schools retain the right to require additional complementary coursework. Such coursework would be separate from University Core requirements, and any additional requirements would be approved through existing program, College/School, and University oversight procedures.

As we move from a fragmented to a unified approach to general education at SLU, it bears repeating that any and all College or School level core curriculum committees will cease to exist. Instead, our shared University

Higher purpose. Greater good.

Core will be overseen by the UUCC. The UUCC has worked diligently to craft a curricular oversight structure for the Core that balances the need for appropriate University-wide representation against the desire to avoid overburdening our faculty with service commitments. This structure, a draft of which the UUCC shared in January with the Council of Deans and Directors, is included in the 1/31 Core Proposal.

The UUCC is a University-wide curricular oversight body that operates in parallel with Undergraduate Academic Affairs Committee (UAAC)—with UAAC overseeing undergraduate programs and policies and the UUCC overseeing the policies and procedures that govern SLU's general education program. To ensure regular consultation and alignment between these two areas of undergraduate education, the Core Director will have a permanent place on the UAAC Academic Subcommittee. Should faculty members have concerns about this consultation process, or concerns about UUCC leadership more broadly, they should bring these concerns directly to the Provost.

Some questions have arisen about the relationship between credit hour and contact hour within the Core. Our University credit hour policy (which is required by both the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), our accrediting body, and the U.S. Department of Education) [can be found here](#) and should address questions about credit /contact hours in the Core and elsewhere.

Finally, many SLU faculty members have expressed concern over whether we will have the teaching and development resources required to deliver this new University Core curriculum. President Pestello and I have already committed to spending just under \$1 million annually on the design and delivery of our new Core—with dedicated budget lines for associate directors, faculty development, overload stipends, co-curricular activities, and adjunct funding.

Yet we need more. The UUCC has delivered a University Core model dedicated to fostering in each student the Jesuit educational ideal of perfect eloquence (*eloquentia perfecta*). This dedication is inspired, in part, by our current SLU undergraduates, who expressed a desire for more oral and written communication instruction in both program and Core courses. Faculty members also rightly noted that the “Writing Intensive” requirement in the Core proposal highlighted the need for faculty development and training to deliver these courses effectively across the University.

The UUCC has appropriately identified a pressing need for more resources devoted to this Core area in order to avoid inevitable delivery gaps. In response, I have approved the following:

- Writing Across the Curriculum specialist (Full-time, tenurable faculty with a coordinating administrative appointment; hire in 2021)
- Ten Non-Tenure Track Core Teaching Specialists for Eloquentia Perfecta; areas will be Oral/Visual Communication, Creative Expression, Written/Visual Communication
(4/4 teaching load, two hires per year, hired over five years beginning in 2022)

While I understand that, over time, our new curriculum will need to change and evolve to meet the needs of students, faculty, and staff, I believe we now have a curricular structure and a funding structure that will move SLU into a new era in undergraduate education. I want to thank all members of the SLU community for participating in this vital work of creating a unified undergraduate experience for all SLU students.

The work undertaken by the UCC on a shared undergraduate SLU Core built upon and was informed by the work of the 2015-16 Task Force on Becoming a SLU Baccalaureate, the 2016-17 College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) Core Curriculum Working Group, and the 2016-17 Joint Faculty Senate - Provost Task Force on the University Core Curriculum and Shared Undergraduate Experience.

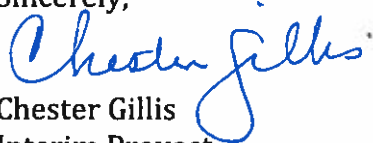
I wish to express my deep gratitude to the members of the UCC: Jennifer Agnew, Sheri Anderson, Lauren Arnold, Gary Barker, Margaret Bultas, Kim Druschel, Ellen Carnaghan, Kyle Crews, Justin Daffron, Peggy Dotson, Laura Franklin, Judy Geczi, Jordan Glassman, Jay Haugen, Amber Johnson, Ginge Kettenbach, Kelly Lovejoy, Emily Lutenski, Fabiola Martinez, Anne McCabe, Ryan McCulla, Filippo Marsili, Louis Nieman, Joseph Nichols, William Rehg, Jennifer Rust, Ness Sandoval, Steve Sanchez, Bryon Sokol, Devita Stallings, Michael Swartout, Christopher Thomas, and Bonnie Wilson, each of whom has dedicated countless hours to this process and all of whom have worked collaboratively together and with the various schools and colleges of the University. Like all of us, they have not always agreed with every detail of the new Core, but, as a model for all of us, they have worked assiduously to arrive at a Core that will serve our students, faculty, and staff well and that will address the interest of the Higher Learning Commission when they visit us in 2021 to assess our academic programs and our general education Core.

I want to thank Ellen Crowell who has skillfully overseen this entire process. This has involved working closely with the committee, the schools and colleges, individual faculty and departments, students, administrators, the Board of Trustees, and other stakeholders across the University. This has included coordinating the work of the committee, presenting at numerous public fora, meeting with small groups from multiple constituencies,

communicating regularly and effectively with all stakeholders, and meeting often with me. We all owe her a great debt of gratitude.

This Core has taken the time and attention of many. Whether you have followed its genesis closely or more episodically, we all know that it will shape elements of our curriculum for generations of students. We also know that it will not be perfect. It is corrigible. Over time it will require refinements or revisions. However, right now, this is our chance to give it a chance. I am fully supportive of its adoption and look forward to the creativity, energy, and intellectual engagement that it brings to SLU undergraduate education.

Sincerely,



Chester Gillis
Interim Provost