August 25, 2016

Dear Faculty,

As we get ready to launch into the excitement of a new academic year, I want to update you on the progress of the Core of Common Studies Revision. First, of all, I would like to thank you for your extraordinary investment in this process. The Core is one of the most important ways that the university defines itself and establishes the fundamental character of its education: Your extensive and intensive contributions to this process reveal a faculty who cares deeply about what it is doing and about how it conducts its business as a community.

Based on the wide range of input from students, faculty and staff, it is clear we, as a campus community, desire a robust Core curriculum that equips students to confront complex problems in an ever-changing global society. We desire a Core that makes our graduates effective communicators who are ready to engage as responsible, moral and ethical individuals with clear sense of purpose. All of these educational aims should be accomplished within the context of Marquette’s rich Catholic and Jesuit liberal arts tradition. Further, students consistently indicate they value their Marquette education but at the same time, they desire more connection between the Core and their majors. The work completed so far in the revision process has us poised to realize all of these goals.

I have endorsed the six integrated learning outcomes (attached) that emerged from your work and all of the input produced over the past year. These outcomes are connected to a tiered curricular structure (also attached) that stresses experiential learning opportunities and integration. The structure provides a foundational experience that will emphasize principles of Jesuit education and allow students to approach the key questions of the 21st century. That foundational element will prepare students to explore key questions and themes through a set of interconnected courses configured to encourage them to think across disciplines. Finally, the Core will conclude with a culminating experience that provides students with experiential learning opportunities connecting Core learning with their majors.

I would like to emphasize the Core revision is still very much in a process of development. That development continues to rely on the support and expertise of faculty as well as input from our students. The next step asks our community to develop specific plans for how the above framework can be implemented. I ask you to think as broadly as possible about what we can collaborate to meet the needs of our students. I will soon charge faculty task forces to address each individual component of the Core. The task forces will include disciplinary experts and faculty representation from all of our seven undergraduate colleges. Task forces will begin shortly and campus meetings and input sessions will be held through the fall. (Updates will be available on the Core revision website.)
One final note about the timing of the Core revision process: The original timeline proposed a launch of a revised Core by the Fall of 2017. To allow for the best possible outcomes, it now seems more reasonable to launch the revised Core in the Fall of 2018.

I close by thanking you once again for your continued contributions to the Core revision. Because the Core is so central to our identity, revising it can be difficult. But by your efforts and full participation, you have ensured a superior outcome—not just for this process, but also for many the students who will experience the new Core.

To learn more about the revision process, please visit the Core of Common Studies revision website (http://www.marquette.edu/common-studies-revision/).

Best wishes for a wonderful start to the fall semester!

Dan Myers
Provost