UCCS Knowledge Area Assessment Plan

Rationale:
The University Core of Common Studies (UCCS) constitutes 36 credits at the undergraduate level, some 28% of the credits required for graduation. Given its size and centrality to the undergraduate mission of Marquette University, a thoughtful and rigorous assessment plan is desired to ensure that the Core lives up to its fullest potential and provides students the opportunity to acquire the skills and knowledges to flourish after graduation.

Assumptions:

- Individual departments and units teaching courses for the knowledge areas are the experts in determining course materials, learning outcomes, and models of assessment.
- The role of the Core Curriculum Review Committee (CCRC) is to provide an external opportunity to evaluate assessment results produced by departments and units; to facilitate conversations among stakeholders across the University about the needs of undergraduates in all of the colleges.
- The Director of Assessment plays a crucial role in the process to help ensure objectivity and to provide expertise in best practices across the country.
- The goal of knowledge area assessment is to identify areas in which students need further assistance. Improving courses and course assignments is an ongoing process, and should be guided by direct assessment measures when possible.
- Knowledge area assessment is not directly linked to a review of individual courses or instructors, which will be a separate process.

Relationship to assessment of Integrated Core Learning Outcomes:
The University Core of Common Studies has a two-part system of assessment: 

- Knowledge area learning outcomes will be assessed according to a four-year rotating schedule;
- Integrated core learning outcomes will be assessed yearly based upon the participation of faculty teaching senior experiences/capstones from across the undergraduate colleges or other places in the curriculum and co-curriculum where these outcomes can be reliably assessed.

Cycle:
The nine knowledge areas will be assessed on a four-year schedule as follows:

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<tr>
<th>CYCLE</th>
<th>ACADEMIC YEAR</th>
<th>KNOWLEDGE AREA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>Rhetoric; Mathematical Reasoning;</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>Human Nature and Ethics; Histories of Cultures and Societies</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>Individual and Social Behavior; Science and Nature; Theology</td>
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### Timeline:

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsible parties</th>
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| 1/15 of previous academic year | Contact Chairs/Directors of departments/units teaching courses in relevant knowledge areas who will be charged with assessment during the following academic year.  
- Identify contact person in departments/units, if not Chair/Directors. | Director of CCRC |
| 5/1 | Follow-up with Chairs/Directors or contact persons to see if any problems or questions are emerging in the development of an assessment plan. | Director of CCRC |
| 8/1-15 | Discuss with Chair/Directors or contact persons finalized plan for assessing courses fulfilling the relevant knowledge area. | Director of CCRC  
Chair/Director/contact person from individual department/unit |
| 10/15 | Brief check in with Chair/Director/Contact person to see if any problems or questions are emerging in the implementation of an assessment plan. | Director of CCRC |
| 5/30 | Submit assessment results from courses to Director of CCRC. Documents would include:  
- rubrics for individual courses assessed;  
- artifacts/examples from each proficiency level (e.g., Proficient, Competent, Developing);  
- a brief written reflection (1-2 pp.) on initial conclusions drawn from assessment results. | Chair/Director/contact person from individual department/unit |
| 6/15 | Forward assessment results to Director of Assessment | Director of CCRC |
| 7/15 | Submit report on assessment results to Director of CCRC. Report would include:  
- aggregated data across courses assessed;  
- artifacts/examples from each proficiency level;  
- initial recommendations based on observed trends. | Director of Assessment |
| 9/15 | Forward assessment report to subcommittee of CCRC for review. Subcommittee will be composed of:  
- area representative  
- 2 other voting members | Director of CCRC |
| 9/20-30 | Presentation of results and initial recommendations by subcommittee to CCRC | Subcommittee members of CCRC |
| 10/1-15 | Submission of results and initial recommendations of CCRC to Chairs/Directors/contact persons for input  
- "Closing the loop" stage 1: inviting Chairs/Directors to identify possible modifications/revisions/etc. based on assessment process. | Director of CCRC |
| 10/15-20 | Submission of final report on assessment of Knowledge Area Outcomes | Director of CCRC |
| 5/30 | "Closing the loop" stage 2: follow-up conversation with | Director of CCRC |
Chair/Directors to identify any modifications/revisions/etc. to core courses that will be implemented in the next academic year.

Chair/Director from individual departments/units

During the subsequent four-year cycle, there will be a "Closing the loop" stage 3, which would involve the Director of CCRC following up with Chair/Directors on the implementation status of modifications/revisions/etc. proposed during the previous assessment cycle.

Results:
Results from the process of Knowledge Area Learning Outcome assessment will be submitted to four groups:

- Individual department/units participating in assessment
- University Assessment Committee
- Annual report to Vice Provost for Undergraduate Teaching and Programs
- University Board of Undergraduate Studies, as requested