Summary of presentations made by the Core Review Planning Team (CRPT) to:
The Faculty on November 9 from Noon to 1:00 pm, and
The Community on November 10 from 4:15 to 5:30

Core Curriculum Director Tom Donnelly called the meeting to order and explained that the goal of the meeting was to work towards a draft goal statement for the Core.

CRPT member Erika Dyson recalled that at the last meeting, the CRPT provided the prompt: "Should workload be a design principle for the core? If so, how might we regulate it across courses?"

The CRPT heard back in general that we should regulate workload across the Core but several questions, concerns, and suggestions also came through in the feedback:

"Are we designing courses (the Core) for the mean of the workload distribution or for the tails of the distribution? The mean is easier to design for, but the tails are where the struggle occurs. We need to provide help to the outliers."

"Collect anonymous workload data in real time."

"What is the definition of a credit hour in terms of total time spent on a class? There seems to be a wide variation among students and among courses."

Participants also identified a set of issues that would complicate the regulation of workload:

- Can we force someone to assign less work?
- Who/what agent acts as the regulator of workload? (the Dean, a faculty committee, Core teaching pods, …?)
- Is a uniform workload equitable when students come in with different prior experiences?
- It is resource intensive to support students who are outliers in a course.
- Why are some students outliers?
- If we take things out of our Core courses, departments may need more units to prepare majors.

Erika Dyson then displayed the expected schedule of upcoming events:

Nov. 9-10: Discuss the draft Statement of Goals of the Core Curriculum. Have we got the basic concept right?

Nov. 13-15: External Review of the Core Curriculum

Nov. 16: Regular faculty meeting with more specifics about bringing a Statement of Goals of the Core Curriculum to a vote

Nov. 30: Discuss the a draft of the Statement of Goals of the Core Curriculum that includes feedback from today's meeting. Refine language of the statement.

Dec. 7: Faculty vote on the Statement of Goals of the Core Curriculum. Paper ballot. If approved, this statement will replace current language in the HMC Catalogue.

Erika Dyson then reminded everyone that the CRPT had heard from over 2,000 survey respondents across all constituencies and has done its best to synthesize the conversations and feedback that they heard this fall. Using that information, they created a statement which first articulates the educational goals of the Core, and then suggests some guiding principles to help achieve those goals. If approved, this statement will replace the current statement of Core Goals.

Erika Dyson stressed that this was not the time for wordsmithing but rather to let the CRPT know if it has the goals and principles roughly correct. There will be a CRPT led Faculty Meeting on November 30 when the language will be finalized.

She then displayed a slide listing the goals and operating principles of the Core:

The Core Curriculum at Harvey Mudd College seeks to nurture students' intellectual curiosity and joy of learning, and provide them with foundational knowledge and skills needed for advanced study in STEM disciplines, and for critical engagement with the humanities, social sciences, and the arts. In keeping with HMC's STEM-focused approach to liberal arts education, students are expected to think critically about consequential problems and complex issues, to make connections across disciplinary boundaries, to communicate and collaborate effectively, and to understand how their personal and professional actions impact the world around them.

In support of these educational goals, the Core Curriculum is guided by these principles:

(i) Be equitable and inclusive, recognizing that students enter our college with different barriers and opportunities for education, leadership, and wellness;

(ii) Provide flexible pathways for all HMC students in order to accommodate differences in background and preparation;

(iii) Observe a workload that provides students with time for activities and obligations other than coursework;

(iv) Allow each department autonomy to present a set of major ideas and methods from its discipline in addition to contributing to a set of foundations that form common expectations for the core.

She then asked attendees to discuss the following prompts in their small groups and enter their responses into the provided computers:

(1) Given the survey results and feedback that have been presented by the Core Review Planning Team this semester, does the opening paragraph appropriately capture the goals for the Core Curriculum? If not, why not?

(2) Would you remove any of the principles, (i) – (iv), listed? If so, why?

(3) Are there critical principles, (i) – (iv), we have not listed? If so, please explain.

In the faculty session on Thursday, November 9, individual faculty members were provided with a sheet of paper listing the four principles and some red and green or blue adhesive dots. They were asked to place green or blue dots next to principles that they wholeheartedly endorsed and red dots next to those whose inclusion in the final document would cause them to vote against it. This was not done for the community session because only faculty members will be voting.