



Goals and Guiding Principles of the Core Curriculum: A Draft Proposal

CRPT Faculty Meeting

Nov. 9, 2017

When we last left you...

At our last meeting, we provided the prompt:

Should workload be a design principle for the core? If so, how might we regulate it across courses?

What we heard back:

- We should regulate workload across the core.
- 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.

When we last left you...(cont'd)

At our last meeting, we provided the prompt:

Should workload be a design principle for the core? If so, how might we regulate it across courses?

What we heard back:

Issues that make workload regulation difficult:

- 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.

Expected Schedule of Upcoming Events:

Today: 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.

Preamble:

- **We heard from over 2,000 survey respondents across all constituencies**
- **We've done our best to synthesize the conversations and feedback we heard this fall**
- **We have created a statement which first articulates the educational goals of the Core, and then suggests the guiding principles that should help to achieve those goals**
- **This is not the time for word-smithing of the document. We will gather again on Nov. 30 to finalize language. Instead, today, we would like to know if we have goals and principles roughly correct.**

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.

Discussion Prompts:

- (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.**

<http://tinyurl.com/ycyea9pw>