



**Thematic Pathway for Reaffirmation
Proposed Areas of Study
Harvey Mudd College
May 1, 2019**

Executive Summary

Harvey Mudd College (HMC) is a STEM-based undergraduate liberal arts college with approximately 900 students 100 full-time tenure track faculty and 246 full- and part-time staff who come together around a robust academic and social life. The theme identified by the HMC community for our reaffirmation is *Healthy Excellence: Putting Success in Perspective*. The theme of Healthy Excellence is comprehensive and provides HMC an opportunity to investigate and integrate the many academic and co-curricular support structures, initiatives, offices and programs that help students, faculty and staff thrive. The umbrella theme of Healthy Excellence can be broken into two interrelated subthemes:

- **Wellness & Culture**

The “healthy” in Healthy Excellence alludes to workload, which has been mentioned in previous accreditation cycles. In 2009, the WASC Visiting Team for the CPR recommended “Harvey Mudd College should continue to examine issues about faculty and student workload to promote balance in personal and professional life.” Recently, we have gathered considerable data from students (Wabash Report, WHAM Study) and faculty (COACHE Survey) that indicates that in their pursuit of excellence, students and faculty are often overextended and find it difficult to fully appreciate their successes and find that their satisfaction, productivity, and/or wellness are impacted. It is important for us to think about the complex connections between the challenges that exist at HMC and the ways in which wellness is tied to performance for students and workplace satisfaction and professional development for faculty and staff. Since last reaffirmation, several centers, initiatives and offices have been established to support members of our community while others have been expanded or re-visioned. Looking purposefully at our culture reflects our community’s support for change in this area and gives us the chance to examine the effectiveness of current structures and implement further improvements.

- **Mission**

The “excellence” in Healthy Excellence refers to the degree to which we are meeting the Harvey Mudd College [mission](#). We need to evaluate the ways in which we are meeting the ambitious goals we have set out. For example, what does it mean for students to be well-versed in scientific, engineering and mathematical disciplines? How and where do students demonstrate their understanding of the impact of their work on society? Are students prepared to assume leadership in their fields? Is there sufficient professional development and support for faculty and staff to also assume leadership in their fields?

As we think about the intersection of our mission with our culture, we envision 3 intersecting projects, each of which has implications for faculty, students and staff. We center these projects in the Core Curriculum, and connect them explicitly to the support structures in place to help students, faculty and staff thrive. This approach provides us with the opportunity to use the Thematic Pathway for Reaffirmation (TPR) process to activate a purposeful discussion of how our work in Core and on our culture intersects and strengthens our mission as a college.

Overview of the Institution

Harvey Mudd College (HMC) is an undergraduate college with a mission to “...*educate engineers, scientists, and mathematicians well versed in all of these areas and in the humanities and the social sciences so that they may assume leadership in their fields with a clear understanding of the impact of their work on society.*” Founded in 1955, the first class of 48 students and seven faculty arrived in 1957; and the first bachelor’s degree candidates graduated in 1959. Currently, HMC offers ten undergraduate majors in STEM fields, as well as options to design an individual program of studies or declare an off-campus major.

HMC is known for its challenging and invigorating academic environment, where undergraduates learn to think across disciplines, participate in collaborative, professional research with high-profile sponsors, understand the social implications of science and learn to clearly communicate their ideas. HMC’s curriculum promotes teamwork and collaboration, notably in the college’s summer research and clinic programs. Faculty and students routinely collaborate on the kind of distinctive, hands-on laboratory and field research usually reserved for graduate students, while our clinic program allows students to apply their academic experience in pursuit of solutions to real-world, technical problems for industrial and corporate clients. Substantial grants and contracts from the federal government as well as private corporations and foundations support considerable research activity for a campus of our size. Research in basic science and technology is a hallmark of the HMC experience, and many graduates go on to positions of distinction in the fields of academe, engineering, and entrepreneurship.

HMC is a member of the Claremont Colleges, a consortium of five undergraduate and two graduate institutions located in Claremont, CA. The Claremont Colleges Services provides shared services (e.g., Library, Information Technology, Campus Safety, Health Services, Financial and Administrative Services). Each of the 7 institutions has its own campus, its own students and faculty, and its own distinctive mission. Undergraduate students may choose from more than 2,000 courses offered each year across the colleges, and for the last several years, 100% of graduating HMC seniors took at least one course at another Claremont College.

Process for the Development of Themes

An inclusive, consultative effort to develop the theme was led by Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty Lisa Sullivan and Chair of the Faculty Patrick Little. The Reaffirmation Steering Committee is comprised of Lisa Sullivan, Patrick Little, Anna Gonzalez (Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students) Liz Orwin (Chair of the Department of Engineering), Kathy Van Heuvelen (Associate Professor of Chemistry and member of the Faculty Executive Committee), Karl Haushalter (Associate Professor of Biology and Chemistry and Chair of the Assessment and Accreditation Committee) and Laura Palucki Blake (AVP for Institutional Research and Effectiveness and ALO).

The Steering Committee reviewed the previous accreditation reports, discussed the mid-cycle review, the results of the Interim Report and WSCUC feedback, with particular attention to issues raised in the Commission’s 2011 letter. The Steering Committee has met monthly: first to discuss strategies for outreach to the HMC community and second to discuss the results of the outreach and select the theme for Component 8, “Institution Specific Themes” of the Institutional Review Process.

Members of the Steering Committee met with additional campus committees in order to discuss potential themes. The Assessment and Accreditation Committee, Department Chairs Committee, and Faculty Executive Committee consulted with departments and divisions on campus, and reported back to the

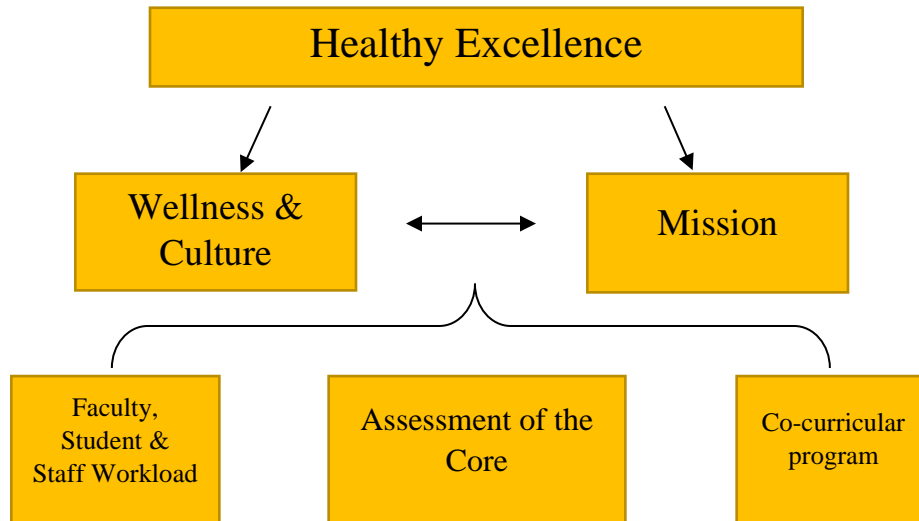
Steering Committee. The President, her Cabinet and the Board of Trustees have received regular reports on theme selection and definition, and the theme was discussed at the March 14th 2019 faculty meeting.

The feedback on the theme was remarkably consistent and positive. Therefore, the Steering Committee feels strongly that Healthy Excellence and the projects that underpin it--the redesign of the Core, issues of workload for faculty, students and staff, and the co-curriculum--accurately and meaningfully represent what the HMC community values and is important for us to reflect upon and assess at this moment in our history.

Description of Each Theme and Project

Over the past several years, there have been initiatives related to our Core and workload, and an increasing focus on our mission. The thematic pathway proposal gives us the opportunity to deepen that commitment and tie all three issues together. We have constructed this work under the umbrella theme of healthy excellence with wellness & culture and mission as the two subthemes. Individual projects operate under each subtheme but also overlap with one another, as can be seen in Figure 1. We view the revision of the Core Curriculum as the central project, having ties to both wellness & culture and to the mission. Separate smaller projects on workload and the co-curricular program also help reinforce and guide further improvements. An important motivation for us in selecting these projects is to create assessable work that brings together various campus constituencies. Specific discussion of each project follows.

Figure 1: Relationship Between Themes, Subthemes and Projects

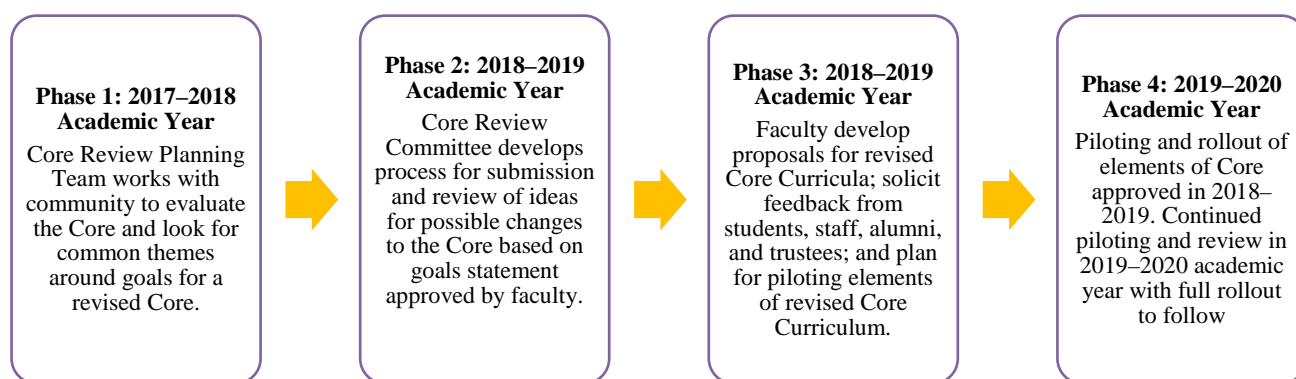


Assessment of the Core. The Core Curriculum is HMC’s signature academic experience, shared by all HMC students. The Core is currently comprised of three semesters of mathematics; two and one-half semesters of physics and an associated laboratory; one and one-half semesters of chemistry and an associated laboratory; a half-semester of college writing; a course in critical inquiry offered by the Department of Humanities, Social Sciences, and the Arts; one semester of biology and an associated laboratory; one course in computer science; and one course in engineering. Most Core courses are offered once annually, and most students complete the Core by the end of the sophomore year.

An evaluation of our Core demonstrates our commitment to Standard One “Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives” (CFR 1.2), and also focuses us on Standard Two “Achieving Educational Objectives Through Core Functions” (CFR 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.10, 2.12) and Standard Four “Creating an Organization Committed to Quality Assurance, Institutional Learning, and Improvement” (CFR’s 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7). In planning a review of our Core, we can determine if we are achieving the outcomes we desire for our students, and if we are doing so in such a way that allows for students to thrive intellectually, socially and emotionally.

Since the last accreditation cycle, we have embarked on an evaluation and a redesign of the Core Curriculum, as part of a regular assessment of Core changes that were implemented in 2009. Figure 2, below, maps out our timeline and process.

Figure 2: Timeline and Phases of Core Revision Process



During 2017, faculty engaged the entire community in an evaluation of the Core as part of an effort to develop a new set of goals for the Core and to frame the redesign. A new goal statement was approved by the faculty in December 2017 and shared with the community:

The Core Curriculum at Harvey Mudd College seeks to nurture students’ intellectual curiosity and joy of learning, provide them with foundational knowledge and skills needed for further study in STEM disciplines, and begin a critical engagement with the humanities, social sciences, and the arts. In keeping with HMC’s liberal-arts approach to STEM education, the Core engages students in thinking critically about consequential problems and complex issues, making connections across disciplinary boundaries, communicating and collaborating effectively, and understanding how their personal and professional actions impact the world around them.

Right now, we are in Phase 3. Faculty have developed several proposals for a revised Core, and the Core Review Committee is working with faculty to refine and articulate details of the proposals, to foster conversation about the extent to which each of the proposals meet the goals articulated in our goals statement, and soliciting feedback from the community around specifics of the proposals with respect to resources and constraints.

As this work moves forward and a redesigned Core Curriculum takes shape, our work will turn to documenting and evaluating the impact of the Core revisions. It is imperative to us to continue to review its content, assess its effectiveness, and understand the extent to which any changes have been impactful.

To do that, we will develop an assessment plan for the Core Curriculum. We will produce an assessment plan that outlines specific learning outcomes and assessment activities for the revised Core Curriculum, and will provide an assessment report that links the work of at least one of the pilot programs to learning outcomes established for the Core. Beyond student learning outcomes, we will also intentionally and explicitly address the extent to which the Core redesign impacts student workload and promotes inclusive strategies related to overall wellness, including reducing stress and creating space for attention to physical, mental and emotional health. Another related question to investigate will be the impact of the revised Core on faculty and staff workload and expectations.

The development and initial execution of the assessment plan will be undertaken by the Core Review Committee and the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness, with longitudinal data from the Registrar's Office and Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. Results will be shared with the Assessment and Accreditation Committee, the Faculty Executive Committee and ultimately the entire HMC community. Additionally, the Teaching and Learning Committee (TLC) has taken the lead on a study of workload and wellness at HMC that is of particular relevance to the Core revision. A guiding principle of this work will be to design an assessment process that creates opportunities for faculty to engage with one another around the meaning of findings and to translate those understandings into changes in how we deliver and assess core courses. We anticipate data from national surveys, course-based assessments and the TLC's workload and wellness study will be instrumental in our assessment of the redesigned Core. While this project will have a completion date for reaffirmation purposes, HMC's assessment of the Core will continue.

Workload of Students, Faculty, and Staff. HMC has been concerned with the impact a rigorous academic culture has on its students, faculty and staff. This project gives us a chance to examine the many support structures—both academic and nonacademic—that help our community members thrive. Many of these structures have been put in place or expanded since our last reaffirmation in 2011, while others have not been examined with respect for their impact on workload. This work focuses our attention on Standard Two “Achieving Educational Objectives through Core Functions” (2.1, 2.11, 2.13) and Standard Three “Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Quality and Sustainability (3.1, 3.3).

At HMC, we acknowledge that good teaching is emotional work—requiring reserves of ingenuity, empathy and patience that can easily be depleted over the course of the semester, especially when combined with a demanding research agenda and in-depth service requirements at both the departmental and college levels. Our faculty are deeply committed to HMC, and oftentimes that means that sabbaticals, course releases and other mechanisms designed to provide relief for faculty in leadership roles redistribute work among remaining faculty, rather than reducing the overall workload. Work on these issues has begun: The Department Chairs Committee has looked at the impact of inclusive pedagogical practices across departments and the Faculty Executive Committee has begun an initiative to realign committee work in the fall of 2019. These projects, in combination with our COACHE results from 2017 and 2020 provide us with necessary data to understand how expectations for teaching, research, service, advising and mentoring impact faculty, and what it models for our students. Each of these projects will produce a written document that outlines findings and develops meaningful standards and measures that can be used to determine actions that support faculty by providing greater flexibility and balance, while remaining transparent and equitable.

Associated with faculty workload is workload for staff. To date, workload has not been systematically addressed for staff, and this project will include a survey of staff on issues of workload. We intend to document and understand the support structures in place for staff, the extent to which they are accessible, used, and properly resourced. Conversations about workload and culture have begun with faculty and students, with an acknowledgement that issues faced by those groups also apply to staff. We anticipate using the results of the staff survey to improve workload culture for staff and to acknowledge and integrate staff into conversations about workload and culture on our campus.

On the student side, the academic structures put in place to help students thrive include the Writing Center, tutoring and grutoring, the Assistant and Associate Deans for Academic Affairs, Disability Services, and the Associate Dean for Academic Resources and Student Success. Co-curricular structures include the Office of Institutional Diversity, the Office of Health and Wellness, Mudders Care for Mudders, the Leonard Fund (which supports small scale student-faculty interaction by providing funds for students to invite faculty for a meal off-campus) and the Decompression Sessions Project to name a few. Many of these support structures have come into existence since the last accreditation cycle, and others have been expanded. The TPR gives us an opportunity to examine the programs we have developed and determine where continued effort is warranted. Examples of guiding questions include: How are the support structures being utilized? Who accesses them and how frequently? Do support structures have common goals? If they do, to what extent are they coordinating their activities and sharing information? Are we appropriately resourcing these support structures? How might they be improved? Are the staff appropriately connected to and in contact with one another and with faculty? Data from the workload and health study is relevant here and will be used to understand the impact of student workload.

Co-Curriculum. Our goal in this final project is to articulate and promote the link between the Office of Community Engagement, Office of Career Services, Office of Institutional Diversity and Residence Life and our academic values as stated in the mission. In doing so, we intend to articulate and assess the impact of the co-curricular support mechanisms in developing students who are able to “...assume leadership in their fields with a clear understanding of the impact of their work on society.”

Looking at the co-curriculum with an eye towards the mission demonstrates our commitment to Standard One “Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives” (CFR 1.2, 1.4), and also focuses us on Standard Two “Achieving Educational Objectives Through Core Functions” (CFR 2.10, 2.11, 2.13) and Standard Four “Creating an Organization Committed to Quality Assurance, Institutional Learning, and Improvement” (CFR’s 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7).

At the center of this project is a desire to develop and implement a strategy to clearly identify the impact of the work being done in our co-curriculum to support our mission. At present, the various offices mentioned above are all actively engaged in activities that support our mission outside the classroom (e.g., leadership development programming, community service, social justice advocacy, internship and career placement) but these endeavors are not yet clearly and consistently aligned under a holistic umbrella that allows students to make the connections between their scientific and technical education and their experiences in the co-curriculum in a deep and meaningful way. The offices mentioned will review their mission and goals and map them to the mission. They will design or develop assessment plans that identify the connections and evaluate their efforts. These assessment plans will be shared across campus through the Assessment and Accreditation Committee (AAC) to promote and establish links between faculty and coursework and the co-curricular efforts. Each office will assess one or more discrete interventions or programs, and the AAC will integrate findings into its annual reporting on the assessment of student learning.

Timeline

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Core Redesign	Gather baseline data on learning outcomes relevant to Core: critical thinking, oral and written communication, societal impact, interdisciplinary thinking, workload, health and wellness.	Articulation of assessment plans for revised Core elements; Leadership structure for Core determined; Data gathering on learning outcomes continues. Assess student workload.	Data gathering continues; Report of assessment findings (both student learning and workload) to community by Core leadership.
Workload	Review of COACHE findings; Actionable items identified and prioritized.	Faculty: Committee realignment; Students: Assessment of academic & co-curricular support structures; Workload study (Core) Staff: Workload survey; staff representation.	Re-administer COACHE Survey SP 2020 Report on assessment of academic & co-curricular support structures; Report on staff workload Study; Prioritize actionable items.
Co-Curriculum	OCE, Res Life, OCS, & OID map goals and learning outcomes to HMC's institutional mission regarding leadership and impact of work on society.	Each unit will develop/refine of multi-year assessment plan to evaluate their efforts; share with AAC.	Each unit will report on one or more discrete assessments or interventions to AAC; AAC reports to FEC, faculty as a whole.

Resources

HMC has made substantial investments of both human and financial capital in these projects leading up to our reaffirmation. Because of HMC's small size, our culture is both consultative and highly involved. We anticipate a fully engaged community effort.

Oversight for the projects will originate out of the Dean of the Faculty's office. The Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness will partner with the Steering Committee and Assessment and Accreditation Committee to coordinate and manage the projects. The assessment of the Core Curriculum will involve the faculty, staff and student members of the Core Redesign Committee, with support from a subset of faculty members teaching in the Core, and the Curriculum Committee. The Faculty workload project will be led by the Faculty Executive Committee and Department Chairs Committee, with support from additional faculty and staff as necessary. The student workload project will involve the Teaching and Learning Committee and members of the Division of Student Affairs, including the Office of Health and Wellness. The co-curriculum project will be led by the Division of Student Affairs, involving the Office of Community Engagement, Office of Career Services, Residence Life, and Office of Institutional Diversity.

Institutional Stipulation

See attached Institutional Report Certification Form.