



Integration Presentation to the Core Planning Committee

September 24, 2013

12:15-2:00 p.m., Serra Hall 204

The CPC subcommittee "Integration" presented to the CPC their report entitled, "Academic Integration in the Core." Mike Williams gave the presentation and members of the Integration subcommittee fielded questions afterward. Faculty were reminded to complete the CIT survey, the results of which would help inform the Catholic Intellectual Tradition (CIT) subcommittee for its upcoming presentation, which is October 22 (CIT and Breadth subcommittees will present together). The Competencies subcommittee will present November 19. All presentations are 12:15-2:00 p.m. in Serra 204. All are encouraged to attend these upcoming presentations.

Williams began the presentation emphasizing that the sample model presented by the Integration subcommittee may change over time and that it is also dependent upon the other subcommittee presentations. He explained that "integration" signifies many things: it is interdisciplinary, involves the application of knowledge, brings together curricular and co-curricular activities, provides a structure to link experiences by building upon a foundation, incorporates high-impact practices, and synthesizes competencies within a developmental model from freshman year through junior/senior years and beyond. The core as it currently stands is not structured for knowledge integration. Research shows that knowledge integration benefits students by providing opportunities to engage in real world problem-solving necessary to address the most important issues now and in the future, as well as understanding those issues from an interdisciplinary point of view by finding patterns, making connections, and synthesizing disparate areas of knowledge through collaborative learning.

The sample integrative core model is a developmental model that would scaffold courses from freshman year through the junior/senior years. Students would complete three units of "integration" within the core. In the first year, students complete the first two units by taking a first year seminar course offered in the fall and spring. The third unit would be a core capstone course or experience. Transfer students would complete two units: One unit of integration in their first semester via seminar course specifically for transfer students, and a second unit as a core capstone course or experience. An example of a developmental approach would be to pair a one-unit integration seminar in the fall with an LLC preceptorial and a one-unit seminar in the spring paired with an LLC cohort. The second and third years would incorporate breadth, CIT, and the competencies. The fourth year would incorporate an integrative core capstone course or experience, from which students could choose one of three options (a major-specific capstone course, a core capstone course, or a capstone seminar linked to an upper-division cluster).

Williams then gave an example of the model by way of the Social Justice LLC, explaining possible scenarios such as linking courses to the integration seminar in the fall and linking cohort courses to the integration seminar in the spring. The cohort courses would also serve as a bridge linking the majority of students through both semesters during in their first year on campus. The fall semester integration seminar could include a competency/ies focus such as writing (and/or oral communications, second language or culture, mathematical/quantitative reasoning, critical thinking/information literacy). The spring semester integration seminar could also include a competency/ies focus while also featuring a community service learning component and a final project/presentation. Williams went on to give the pros and cons of major-specific, core, and cluster capstones. He concluded the presentation by summarizing the integrative model and reemphasizing the importance of integration in linking courses and experiences in more meaningful ways for students. With an integrative developmental core model, students would synthesize and apply their

learning to problem solving real-world issues of importance and complexity, providing them the tools and opportunities to engage as responsible citizens in a global society, one of USD's core values and a primary goal of a liberal arts education, on campus and in life.

A Q&A session began with a thought on envisioning the capstone as a cross between a discipline-specific and cluster model. An upper division course may be created or revised to have an interdisciplinary component that would include one or more of the competencies, such as the current "W" and "D" courses, but is this idea ambitious enough? The business and engineering schools are working on capstone experiences where students work on a project with an outside company that consults on the project. The engineering department is investigating a collaboration with the business school to have the business students work with the engineering students. How might the CAS students collaborate with the engineering and business students? If the project takes place in Mexico, for example, then students in Spanish and political science could also be involved. If a project is related to building or construction, then engineering and business students may collaborate with art and architecture students. If it is related to healthcare, then students in the sciences, business, and engineering might collaborate. These types of collaborative projects are already taking place in the business and engineering schools but less so in programs in the College.

Engineering works on fifteen projects per year and each project is two semesters long. Finding non-engineering faculty to make the time commitment might be difficult. Engineering projects are based on industry demand and it may be difficult to plan ahead in creating projects for students who are not in the Engineering program. Even so, there are other opportunities to involve non-engineering students that should be identified and pursued.

Also noted was that some departments have too many majors, making a major-specific capstone experience difficult to implement. In this case, departments with a high number of majors could consider the cluster or core capstone instead of the major-specific capstone. Another option would be to give all students the choice of a major-specific, core, or cluster capstone, or to require all students to take a hybrid capstone that might integrate elements of all three. If the capstone is writing intensive, a good place to assess students who might need assistance with their writing might be the first semester seminar, where students needing help could be identified as early as their first semester on campus.

The "extra" capstone unit needs to be clarified in terms of workload. Capstone experiences vary. Also, which faculty would get the credit for teaching the unit, the the LLC preceptorial faculty or the professor? Who would judge the content of the integrative experience? How many faculty would be needed to teach it? Would additional faculty hires be required? Resources should reflect the best practices of a new core model. LLC preceptorials for new and transfer students are 100% as of AY13-14. The LLC requirement has already added to the workload of preceptors, but if the LLC preceptorial requirement also included an integrative element, would this suffice? How does the LLC preceptorial link to FYE and thus a potential integrative element or model? In terms of practicality, lecturing is only a part of faculty workload. Banking units could be problematic. The one-and-a-half credit hours for teaching a preceptorial would still be in effect. If fewer required core courses are taught, faculty load might not be adversely affected. Is there a way to meld the units of LLC preceptorial into the integrative seminar and capstone units, or should they remain separate?

Regarding oversight, would the integration committee evaluate the capstone integration and also the first year experience integration? How will the integration model affect course scheduling? Other important items to consider are classroom space, faculty allocation, course release time (which

would increase teaching load of adjuncts), the hiring of additional FT lecturers in step with the new healthcare laws, whether an integration course would be 3+1 units or four units, how grading would be impacted if two grades are to be given (for the seminar and for the capstone course) and who would do the grading, and how it would be known if students were ready to advance to the one-unit capstone course. It was mentioned the one-unit course could possibly be taken for credit/no credit instead of a grade. Another concern is how the capstone course might affect juniors and seniors with heavy math and science courses during the time the integrative capstone would be taken.

Opportunities that may be created by this model include the opportunity for faculty to further develop their teaching and research, to allow students and faculty to approach problem solving in learning across the curriculum, to increase collegiality and cross-collaboration, and to enhance teaching and advising.

One determination to be made would be how committees are to be formed to approve courses for the core model and for assessment – would the core curriculum committee approve the courses? There is the risk of having too many committees and too much oversight, but the committees that are formed must be representative of the schools of engineering and business and the College.

It was asked if faculty would be trained on teaching integratively. CEE has done workshops on team teaching best practices that have included handouts. Others wondered if the integrative model would involve too many faculty teaching at once. A student who was present remarked that she likes the idea of incorporating the real world experience of community service learning. Might CSL be the capstone, or a part of it? How might CSL be linked to the LLC preceptorial, if it is not already, and how would this affect an integrative model in general?

The SBA already has a capstone of its own. Should there be a core capstone in addition to a school or major capstone? Is that too many capstones, too much to expect of students and faculty? Perhaps majors should decide whether to keep their own capstone. Perhaps the additional one-unit would not be a capstone experience if the major decideds to keep its own capstone experience.

Also asked was whether the integrative sequence would be offered each semester, such as for incoming freshmen in the spring. If a student fails his or her first semester seminar (whether s/he starts in the fall or spring), what would the next steps be in getting the student back on track?

Some also wondered whether the term capstone should be used at all. Perhaps use “integrative experience” instead.

A majority of people at the meeting liked the idea of the first year seminar being spread through the fall and spring. They also thought that flexibility would be the most important and effective, especially at the upper division level. Perhaps a good place to start is to articulate the flexible and fluid areas before “drilling down” to the intricacies of any considered core model. Perhaps an inventory of all courses in the catalog, including those taught infrequently, could be taken to find commonalities and links which would foster the competencies, breadth, CIT, and integration.

The CIT and Breadth subcommittees present on October 22 from 12:15-2 p.m. in Serra 204. The competencies present on November 19 at the same time and place. All are encouraged to attend these presentations.