

## **Enhanced Components Subgroup Report To the Core Planning Committee**

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The principle of enhanced components recognizes the value of meaningful learning opportunities both in and outside the classroom by connecting the theoretical with the practical through reflection and synthesis. Research shows that such enhancements promote a deeper learning where students learn not only the theoretical concept but also the “underlying meaning of the information” (Kuh, 2008, p. 14). Students who experience two or more enhanced components “retain, integrate, and transfer information at higher rates” (p. 14). In this report, the members of the subcommittee will briefly outline the concept of enhanced components; place enhancements within the context of USD’s mission, Catholicity, and the Core learning outcomes; make general recommendations regarding enhanced components; articulate student learning outcomes for enhanced components; and describe one possible model of enhancements in the Core.

### **Enhanced Components**

Enhanced components are often called high impact practices and come in a variety of forms and types. George Kuh’s (2008) work on high-impact educational practices informs the types of components we are proposing and include:

1. First year seminars and experiences
2. Common intellectual experiences
3. Learning communities
4. Writing-intensive courses
5. Collaborative assignments and projects
6. Undergraduate research
7. Diversity/global learning
8. Service learning, community-based learning, community-based research
9. Internships
10. Capstone courses and projects

Kuh’s research reports that high impact (H.I.) practices promote deep learning because:

1. H.I. practices “typically demand that students devote considerable time and effort to purposeful tasks” (p. 14).
2. H.I. practices puts students “in circumstances that essentially demand they interact with faculty and peers about substantive matters, typically over extended periods of time” (p. 14).
3. H.I. practices increase “the likelihood that students will experience diversity through contact with people who are different from themselves” (p. 15).
4. “Students typically get frequent feedback about their performance in” H.I. practices (p. 15).
5. H.C. practices “infuses opportunities for active, collaborative learning” (p. 15)

## **University of San Diego and Enhanced Components**

USD's commitment to academic excellence, a high quality liberal arts education, personalized instruction, and holistic education create a learning culture conducive to high impact practices are evident in the fact that many of the enhancements listed in Kuh's report thrive on our campus. These include global learning (study abroad), service learning, community-based learning and research, internships and practicums, and capstone courses and projects. Additionally, the Learning Living Communities (LLC) may provide a context for other high impact practices such as first year seminars, common intellectual experiences, and learning communities. These efforts, however, exist almost entirely outside the Core. Our subgroup believes that there is an obvious opportunity to use high impact practices to enhance Core learning and further USD's mission, Catholicity, and learning outcomes.

### **USD's Mission**

Enhanced components are compatible with the mission of the university and reflect a holistic approach to education. Our mission statement states that USD is "committed to the . . . fullest development of the whole person. . .[and] provides opportunities for the physical, spiritual, emotional, social, and cultural development of students. The University provides professional education grounded in these foundations of liberal learning while preparing students to understand complex issues and express informed opinions with courage and conviction."

The mission statement also reiterates the importance of compassionate service. "The University embraces the Catholic moral and social tradition by its commitment to serve with compassion, to foster peace and to work for justice. The University regards peace as inseparable from justice and advances education, scholarship and service to fashion a more humane world."

### **Catholicity**

Enhanced components have the potential to strengthen our Catholic identity. The recent *Report of the Task Force on the Catholic Intellectual Tradition in the Core Curriculum* reinforces the connection between our Catholic identity and some enhanced components. The report observes that "USD's strong, pioneering, and lasting commitment to community service-learning is a strength of the institution, embodies our mission, and fits with this aspect of the Catholic intellectual tradition." The report also observes the importance of community building that lies at the heart of many of the enhanced components. "The Catholic intellectual tradition promotes the development and growth of community by fostering mutual understanding, tolerance, acceptance and respect among groups and individuals, both on campus and in the larger community beyond. . . A sense of community is promoted within and throughout the university, and its local, national, and international surroundings. The establishment of personal and institutional connections enables the growth and maintenance of community on each of these levels. An aspect of nurturing this web of connections includes promoting throughout the University the value of rendering service to the community."

Finally, the report endorses synthesis and reflection of the Core, as the essential reason for the effectiveness of enhanced components. "Learning is especially meaningful when comprehensive

questions are posed and addressed from a variety of approaches. The Catholic intellectual tradition holds that skills, insights, and knowledge gained in one area of life or scholarly inquiry can fruitfully inform quests for answers in another and that learning and the search for truth, therefore, is a continuous process of making connections.”

### **Core Learning Outcomes**

The University of San Diego faculty has articulated two important concepts that inspire the role of enhanced components in the undergraduate curriculum. First, in the Undergraduate Learning Goals and Outcomes, Goal 4: Integrate Patterns of Learning states that students will

Develop the ability to synthesize disparate areas of knowledge and courses of study through individual and collaborative learning. For example, integrate knowledge and skills through team-taught courses, capstone projects, performances, or interdisciplinary seminars as potential formats. (Outcome 12: synthesis of core curriculum outcomes)

And in the Core Proposal, the enhanced components general principle articulates that

A well-rounded student benefits from the perspectives of a core curriculum that allows students to synthesize and reflect upon their curricular experiences. The new Core should have some kind of enhanced component, which may include one or more of these possibilities: experiential learning, community service learning, international study, a capstone, undergraduate research, team teaching, an advanced cluster, or other high impact practices.

### **Recommendations**

The concepts of synthesis and reflection shape our recommendations about how enhanced components should be embedded in the core and the major. We stress the importance of time, feedback from faculty and peers, and reflection as critical factors in achieving synthesis and reflection. We acknowledge the value of writing and teaching as key practices to developing synthesis. To that end, we make the following recommendations:

- 1) Students should be required to participate in at least two enhanced components as part of the new Core.
- 2) These experiences should be developmental in nature and span the entire educational experience of students.
- 3) To be considered an enhanced component, an activity must promote synthesis and reflection of knowledge. Most writing and teaching opportunities for students promote synthesis and reflection. As do quality service and civic engagement programs.
- 4) Students should be able to select enhanced opportunities from broad ranges of components that best fit their needs, interests, and desire for intellectual development.
- 5) Some enhanced components should be available in majors.

## **Student Learning Outcomes**

After participating in an enhanced component, students will be able to ...

1. Independently create wholes out of multiple parts (synthesize) or draw conclusions by combining examples, facts, or theories from more than one field of study or perspective.
2. Adapt and apply skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation to new situations to solve difficult problems or explore complex issues in original ways.
3. Meaningfully synthesize connections among experiences outside of the formal classroom (including life experiences and academic experiences such as internships and travel abroad) to deepen understanding of fields of study and to broaden own points of view.

## Proposed Model

The proposed model is an example of one way that the Core Planning Committee might integrate enhanced components into the core following our recommendations and adhering to the student learning outcomes. There are surely other models but we offer this one as a starting point of discussion while understanding that other important ideas which may contradict or support our model have emerged from various other subgroups. Our model contains four elements: 1) Preceptorial in an LLC combined with a one unit, theme based workshop; 2) two service or citizenship courses; a capstone experience.

Course	Notes
<p><b>Preceptorial and writing workshop</b></p> <p>Preceptorials may be either introductory courses for particular majors, or specially designed thematic core courses specific to the LLC theme. The advanced type of course would be preferable. All students in a particular LLC would be in a one-unit intensive writing workshop. The workshop would stress reflection and synthesis in relationship to the LLC theme. The workshop would be run by upper division students (who would thus be given an opportunity for reflection and synthesis as they worked with first year students) and supervised by the writing center.</p>	<p>Enhanced components do not derive their power for transformation (and they can be transformative) through the activities in and of themselves, but through depth of engagement, integration and reflection. Thus we envision that LLCs will become tools to help students develop the practice of engaged, integrative reflection. We believe that LLCs will do this most effectively if the courses in the LLCs are ALL special courses which address the LLC. However, the committee also supports flexibility and need for many majors to continue offering introductory courses with major advising. The one unit course would not only promote the student learning outcomes but would also unify the divergent courses around the theme and move the LLC's towards more engaged learning living community.</p>
<p><b>2 Service and Citizenship Experiences (SC)</b></p> <p>Students must have at least two Service or Citizenship experiences. Possible such experiences would include courses that are marked with the SC suffix, indicating a course built around experiential learning related to either service or citizenship. These can include courses that are involved in community service, cultural research, community-based research, and some study abroad programs. Students can also fulfill the SC requirement through participation in approved non-academic programs, such as service projects during breaks.</p>	<p>The key idea here is to use the menu of enhanced components to expand, deepen and intensify the experience students have of the intertwined themes of Catholicity and Diversity beyond the classroom. Service can be a fundamental aspect of our Catholic identity. And experiential learning, captured by the idea of citizenship, is a natural extension of Diversity. Both Service and Citizenship courses contribute to our persona as a Change Maker University. The SC requirement asserts the interrelatedness of Catholicity and Diversity, which has two important effects. The political and social issues that are fundamental to Diversity can enliven our expression of Catholicity, guiding it toward the social justice tradition. At the same time, Catholicity provides Diversity with a central place in the university, increasing its authority and gravitas.</p>
<p><b>Capstone Experience</b></p> <p>A capstone experience should occur in the senior year and integrate the entire educational experience of a student including both the core and the major. However, there should be flexibility and choice. Some capstone experiences may be within a major while others, like multi-disciplinary clusters might be in the core. The variety of capstone experience includes: directed research, theses, internships, individual projects or performances, group projects or performances, portfolios, and senior clusters.</p>	<p>The type of capstone experience will vary according to discipline. For example in STEM disciplines it could more likely include directed research; in the social disciplines it could be group projects and or community service; in the humanities it could be a choice of thesis or cluster; and in business an internship. The majority of the departments in the CAS and SOBA already have capstone experiences in their catalogue of courses. Usually these courses are optional.</p>