

Minutes for the **Carolina Core Committee Meeting**  
February 11, 2014, 12:30 – 2:00 pm  
Thomas Cooper Library, Room 204

**Members Present:**

Mary Ann Byrnes, Sara Corwin, Helen Doerpinghaus (Administrative Co-Chair), Kris Finnigan (ex-officio), Andy Gillentine, Kimberly Glenn, Janet Hudson (substituting for Chris Nesmith), Stuart Hunter, Carolyn Jones, Joe Rackers (Faculty Co-Chair), Virginia Weathers

**Members Absent:**

Pam Bowers (ex-officio), John Bowles, Kenneth Campbell, Ron Cox, Brian Habing (ex-officio), Stuart Hunter, Allison Jacques, Carrie Linder (ex-officio), James Kellogg, James Knapp (ex-officio), Gene Luna, Susan Parlier, Kimberly Simmons, Jerry Wallulis,

**Specialty Team Chairs Present:**

Alexander Beecroft, Saskia Coenen-Snyder, Chris Holcomb, George Khushf, Camelia Knapp, Douglas Meade, Shelley Smith

**Specialty Team Chairs Absent:**

Erik Doxtader, Sam Hastings, Mary Robinson

Joe Rackers called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. The October minutes were approved unanimously.

Joe called on Kris Finnigan for an update on the Carolina Core website and course approvals. Kris reported that there was a slow-down in course submissions now that the bulk of courses had been through the approval process. For those courses still being submitted the approval process seems to be working well. Some faculty proponents need to be contacted because they have not resubmitted proposals with requested revisions. Kris noted that we removed the indicator button for integrated course approval since these integrated courses in the major are not required to go through this same process.

Kris noted that the revised GHS learning outcome had been approved by Faculty Senate and that the new language appears now on the website. The list of approved Carolina Core cross-listed courses has been clarified and updated. The posting of all Carolina Core approved course syllabi has been updated and the list of all integrated courses in the majors will be posted soon.

Kris reminded everyone that in October we asked that the Carolina Core website better target individual interests of 1) faculty submitting courses, 2) advisors guiding selection of course in the Core, and 3) students looking for information on the Carolina Core. Changes to the site have been made to better focus on particular interests of faculty, advisors, and students.

Joe updated the committee on what has been happening with the Carolina Core since October. The pilot was conducted to review student work in Information Literacy. He thanked Sam Hastings, chair of the Information Literacy Specialty Team, as well as Carolyn Jones and Virginia Weathers, members of the Team. He recognized the efforts of Karen Brown, Chris Holcombe, and Maureen Petkewich, all of whom are responsible for courses in this outcome area. A great deal of time and effort has gone into this first Core assessment pilot.

Joe noted that the Carolina Core is gaining national attention for the University. Penn State had contacted him to learn more about USC's general education curriculum revision, and he had an in-depth conference call with them to answer questions about what we had done. Academic Impressions published a study in fall 2013 on best practices in general education revision, and featured USC as a model to follow. Helen taught a subsequent workshop for Academic Impressions in January in Chicago on general education revision.

Next we reviewed membership on the Specialty Teams. There have been a few changes in who is able to serve, and we will circulate the list electronically to update that for the semester.

Joe suggested a change in the Carolina Core Committee meeting schedule. We have completed the revision of the curriculum and implementation of the new Core. We are in a "review and improvement-stage" now and monthly meetings may not be needed. He proposed that we meet twice per semester, in February and April, and then in September and November. Most of our focus will be on receiving reports of student learning in the various competency areas and taking action as needed to continuously improve the Core. The Committee unanimously agreed to change the meeting schedule to twice per semester.

Nicole Spensley from the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (IRA) reported on the pilot review of student learning in Information Literacy. She gave summary results (attached) and will send the full report electronically as well. Nicole explained that four faculty responsible for the teaching of Information Literacy directed the review: Sam Hastings (SLIS 202), Karen Brown (LIBR 101), Chris Holcombe ENGL 102), and Maureen Petkewich (STAT 112). They met to identify which learning goals would be reviewed and which assignment might be used for this. They agreed on an assignment common across courses: an annotated bibliography with a short reflection essay. They also identified instructors in their areas who might be willing to participate in reviewing student work. The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment hosted a 2-day training to go over the use of Blackboard Outcomes and to train reviewers in how to rate student work. Reviewers read and rated the work together on the second day.

The pilot provided information not only on student learning but also on the process itself. Nicole indicated that they want to streamline training, allow reviewers to rate student documents off-site if they prefer, and consider using 3 rather than 2 raters to reduce incidence of split reviews. Since this was a pilot we have the opportunity to improve on our process and make changes.

The Committee discussed the results of the pilot. Sara Korwin indicated that based on her experience in Public Health the general level of rater agreement and the overall results on student learning were

strong for a pilot study. Chris Holcombe talked about how the assignments were chosen and what other Specialty Teams and faculty teaching in the Core might consider when planning for assessment of outcomes in their areas. He clarified that the assignments should be assignments (e.g., papers, essays, speeches, tests, etc.) already existing in the courses.

Janet Hudson noted that the Regional campuses are already reviewing student work in the Carolina Core and that it is working well. They have their own (non-Blackboard Outcomes) system for uploading student work, randomly sampling assignments, forwarding these to reviewers, conducting review off-site, and compiling results for continuous improvement purposes. We agreed that Nicole and others would meet with Janet in the next few weeks to find out more about what the Regional campuses are doing. We want to handle review of student work as efficiently as we can and in a way that is SACS compliant across campuses.

Nicole distributed a draft schedule for the other Carolina Core pilot assessments (attached). We discussed whether we preferred to have VSR come up for review early on, and George Khushf noted this may be a good way to move understanding and implementation of VSR along more quickly. Several of the learning areas, VSR, AIU, and GSS, cross several departments and a range of course and embracing this heterogeneity may be a challenge. Everyone agreed that the schedule looked good and that we would follow this going forward.

The plan is that this spring 2014 we will run a larger pilot of INF and also pilot CMW. This fall we will do full-fledged review of a sample from all sections of INF, and pilot GSS, VSR, and GFL. We are looking into the best approach for GFL given the nature of the course offerings: student work is in various languages and some nationally-recognized testing is already conducted to demonstrate student proficiency.

The Committee thanked Nicole and her office for their work on the pilot. Nicole noted that Carrie Linder has been leading the way with Carolina Core review and is responsible for the Information Literacy report. (Due to weather cancellations Carrie was unable to attend but she will continue to be the lead person in the IRA office on Carolina Core review.)

There is a great deal of work going on with review and improvement of the Carolina Core. The pilot and full-fledged assessments will be the main focus of what we do for the next 3 years. The Specialty Teams will engage fully when their learning goal is the pilot or assessment focus in a given semester. We will depend on the IRA office to help guide the process.

Joe reminded everyone of the Undergraduate Studies Forum on Wednesday, April 2, 12 noon – 2:00 p.m. The Forum will provide updates on

- Carolina Core
- USC Connect
- Carolina Leadership Initiative and Graduation with Leadership Distinction
- Undergraduate Advising
- Technology Changes (Banner and DegreeWorks)

The next meeting of the Carolina Core Committee will be April 8, 12:30 – 2:00 p.m. in TCL 204.

Submitted by H. Doerpinghaus

## Proposed Carolina Core Assessment Schedule

Each component of the Carolina Core should complete a pilot and be fully assessed at least once before the university's next SACS accreditation visit. To this end, the following schedule is being proposed:

Semester	Type of Assessment	Core Components Included
Fall 2013	Pilot – sample of sections	INF (limited sample)
Spring 2014	Pilot – sample of sections	INF (larger sample), CMW
Fall 2014	All sections participating	INF
	Pilot – sample of sections	GSS, VSR, GFL*
Spring 2015	All sections participating	CMW
	Pilot – sample of sections	SCI, CMS, GHS
Fall 2015	All sections participating	GSS, VSR, INF, GFL*
	Pilot – sample of sections	ARP, AIU
Spring 2016	All sections participating	SCI, CMS, GHS
Fall 2016	All sections participating	ARP, AIU, CMW
Spring 2017	All sections participating	GSS, VSR, INF, GFL*

Each Carolina Core component will begin the assessment process by participating in a small-scale pilot. Core components will then have one semester off in order to analyze results and makes changes to their assessment process before participating in a full assessment the following semester. After participating in a full assessment, one group of Carolina Core components will be assessed each major semester (Fall and Spring). Components are assigned to one of three groups:

Group A: GSS, VSR, INF, GFL\*

Group B: SCI, CMS, GHS

Group C: ARP, AIU, CMW

This rotation will create a structure where each Carolina Core component will be assessed twice every year and a half – once in Fall and once in Spring. An example follows.

Semester	Assessment Group
Fall 2017	SCI, CMS, GHS
Spring 2018	ARP, AIU, CMW
Fall 2018	GSS, VSR, INF, GFL*
Spring 2019	SCI, CMS, GHS
Fall 2019	ARP, AIU, CMW
Spring 2020	GSS, VSR, INF, GFL*

