Introduction

The CLA Core is a major influence on the student experience in the College of Liberal Arts at Purdue. Since 1993, the core has shaped the education of thousands of undergraduates pursuing degrees in the humanities, social sciences, and the arts. Liberal Arts is one of only three colleges at Purdue with a college-specific core; others include the colleges of Purdue Polytechnic and Science. In addition to the college core, CLA students must also complete a university core of 30 credit hours.

History of the CLA Core

For a full account of the timeline and history of the creation of Curriculum 2000, see item I: Background, in the PDF titled Curriculum 2000 Report.

Fall 1989, Dean David A. Caputo appointed a committee to review the college undergraduate core curriculum. The committee initiated a thorough review that led the committee to conclude that a major revision was needed. The School of Liberal Arts Faculty Senate approved the Committee’s proposal in February 1992 (Fall 1993 was first semester in use). Known as “Curriculum 2000”, the proposal was subsequently ratified by the full faculty.

Structure of the CLA Core

For a full account of how the goals and structure of Curriculum 2000 were created, see item II: Report of the Committee, in the PDF titled Curriculum 2000 Report.

General education requirements ensure that each student will have the knowledge, ability, and skills needed to be an effective and productive citizen in our rapidly changing world. Achieving this goal requires a thorough knowledge of one’s own culture and the diversity of actual and possible alternatives to it; the ability to grasp and analyze problems, and to suggest and critically evaluate solutions to them; and the skill to articulate and advocate such solutions effectively. A liberal education should enable one to grasp and respond analytically and intelligently to the concerns of people from a wide variety of cultural and intellectual backgrounds.

Given this rationale for general education in the liberal arts, the committee articulated a set of specific goals it felt were not only desirable but also necessary outcomes of the liberal education of our students. The committee arrived at thirteen such essential goals and organized the course requirements in terms of these goals.
1. Facility in English Composition & Communication 9 hrs.
2. Facility in Other Languages (fourth level course of a language other than English) 3 hrs.
4. Knowledge of the Western Heritage 6 hrs.
5. Appreciation of the United States Tradition 3 hrs.
6. Awareness of Other Cultures 3 hrs.
9. Consideration of Gender Issues 3 hrs.
11. Exploring Social Ethics 3 hrs.
13. Knowledge of Natural Sciences 6 hrs.

57 hrs

**CLA Core at Present**

To review a current copy of the CLA Core, go here.

Since approval, the CLA Core has been reviewed and maintained by the Educational Policy Committee of the CLA Senate, as detailed in the Curriculum 2000 proposal document: A Core Implementation Advisory Committee, appointed by the Dean and chaired by an Associate Dean, will resolve routine organizational questions as they develop. The Senate’s Educational Policy Committee will retain its traditional role in any future changes.

As reported in October 2015, some small adjustments were made in the process of adoption by the Senate and afterward. Mainly there were reductions in the number of required credits/courses because the core as proposed in the report was thought to occupy more of a student's program than it should.

There was a conscious effort to preserve a large bloc of "free electives", not directed by general or departmental requirements; that was deemed an important part of a Liberal Arts education, as was the general education encompassed in the Core.

The requirement in Western Heritage was reduced from 2 courses (6 credits) to 1 course (3 credits).

The requirement in Individual and Society was reduced from 2 courses (6 credits, 1 course from each group) to 1 course (3 credits, 1 course from either group).

The English Composition part of "English Composition and Communication" was reduced from 9 credits to 6 (or 7, depending on the ENGL choice; COM 114 remains), due to a later change in ENGL. As a result, the core requires either ENGL 106 or 108 instead of the earlier 2-course sequence (ENGL 101/102, no longer offered).

The original term "International Perspective" changed first to "Global Perspective", and then subsequently to “Global Issues”. 
At present, the core contains over 276 courses in 13 categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Category</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Written and Oral Communication</td>
<td>6-7 cr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Other Languages (Proficiency through Level IV in one language)</td>
<td>3-12 cr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mathematics and Statistics (3 cr in each area)</td>
<td>3 cr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Western Heritage</td>
<td>6 cr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. United States Tradition</td>
<td>3 cr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Other Cultures</td>
<td>3 cr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Aesthetic Awareness</td>
<td>3 cr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Racial and Ethnic Diversity</td>
<td>3 cr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Gender Issues</td>
<td>3 cr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Individual and Society</td>
<td>6 cr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Social Ethics</td>
<td>3 cr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Global Issues</td>
<td>3 cr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Natural Sciences</td>
<td>6 cr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>45-61 cr</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CLA Core Renewal Task Force**

In his August 2016 letter, Dean David Reingold said, “As we consider curricular innovation, we will begin a conversation about our core curriculum, determining how those requirements, in conjunction with the University core curriculum, function for students who want to pursue degrees in liberal arts as either a first or a second major.”

The CLA Core has not been formally reviewed as a whole since 1992. The creation of the University Core Curriculum (UCC), the re-organization of CLA in 2011 (and the creation of the College of Health and Human Sciences), the implementation of the 120 credit hour rule in 2011, and changes to admissions (e.g., the 4-year math requirement in 2009), among other changes, have unfolded without considering if (and how) this impacts the general education in CLA.

To begin this review, the CLA Core Renewal Task Force was created in Fall 2016. This group of faculty, with representatives from the arts, humanities, and social sciences, worked to initiate a faculty-led evaluation of the CLA Core Curriculum, including data on core course enrollments and benchmarking against peer institution core requirements.

Results of the evaluation will inform a CLA faculty review of the core curriculum to determine the best mix of courses for Purdue students pursuing the Bachelor of Arts degree. The Core Renewal Task Force for 2016-2017 included three faculty representing the humanities, social sciences, and the arts, with the Associate Dean of Undergraduate Education as chair.
The task force met regularly over the 2016-2017 academic year. To evaluate the CLA Core, the committee decided to complete the following tasks:

1. CLA Core 3 year Data
2. Faculty Survey
3. Advisor Survey
4. Student Survey
5. Big 10 Undergraduate Curriculum Analysis

The task force presented a faculty forum at the March 21, 2017 CLA full faculty meeting to share updates and facilitate a public discussion of the CLA Core.

The task force planned to submit their completed report at the final CLA Senate meeting on April 18, 2018, but delayed the delivery of the report to the first CLA Senate meeting of the 2017-2018 academic year to allow time to complete the Big 10 Academic Alliance data collection.

**CLA Core 3 year Data**

To review the full results of the CLA Core 3 year Data, [go here.](#)

Kristen Hunt, Administrative Assistant to the Dean and Data Manager for CLA, created a data report that included the following information:

1. Three years of CLA course enrollments, 2013-2016
2. All CLA undergraduate lecture courses at the West Lafayette campus
3. Course matches to Core Fulfillment provided by CLA and UCC website

A very short summary of the results includes the following information:

71% of credit hours offered by CLA over the 3-year period were from courses included in both the CLA Core and the University Core Curriculum.

Three percent were included only in the UCC, and 6 percent were included only in the CLA Core.

20% of courses offered by CLA are listed in neither the CLA Core or the UCC.
Faculty Survey

To review the full results of the Faculty Survey, go here.

The faculty survey is based on responses from 135 tenured/tenure-track faculty in the College of Liberal Arts, with an overall response rate of 48 percent. The assessment was created by the CLA Core Renewal Task Force and administered online through Qualtrics.

A very short summary of the results includes the following information:

Of the 135 faculty who responded to the survey (48% of T/T total):

1. 41% strongly believe in the necessity of a core curriculum for CLA students.
2. 80% believe that the CLA Core should integrate with the University Core; 25% believe the CLA Core Curriculum should remain independent of the UCC.
3. 47% believe the most important role of the CLA Core is to expose students to important issues and concepts; 13% believe the most important role is to expose students to different disciplines.
4. 61% think the CLA Core Curriculum should focus on content, versus 39% who think the CLA Core Curriculum should focus on learning outcomes.
5. 74% believe the CLA Core should have a large number of course offerings to increase diversity and flexibility.
6. 56% believe the categories of the CLA Core should be updated.
7. Individual & Society (42%) and United States Traditions (38%) are the categories most identified to be removed from the CLA Core; Written & Oral Communication and Other Languages, the least (5% each).
8. 29% agreed that the CLA Core should be eliminated entirely.

Advisor Survey

To review the full results of the Advisor Survey, go here.

The advisor survey is based on responses from 12 academic advisors in the College of Liberal Arts, with an overall response rate of 75 percent. The survey questions and format was created in consultation with CLA Academic Advising leadership and administered online through Qualtrics.

The results of the questionnaire indicate that overall, our advisors are content with the CLA Core. They agree that courses listed in the CLA Core but not regularly offered are a recurring problem. They offer a variety of suggestions for courses that might be considered for addition or deletion from each category.
Student Survey

To review the full results of the Student Survey, go here.

Student opinion and reflection on the CLA Core was gathered by Professor Robin Clair, Brian Lamb School of Communication. In her class, COM 31200, Rhetoric in the Western World, Spring 2017, Professor Clair asked 31 students the following questions:

1. Should the CLA Core be maintained, modified, or eliminated?
2. If you believe the CLA Core should be modified, how so?

The results of the questionnaire communicate the following information:

1. 15, or 48% of students recommend maintaining the CLA Core in its present form.
2. 11, or 35% of students recommend keeping the core with modifications.
3. 5, or 16% of students recommend eliminating the core.

Suggestions for modifications included:

1. Eliminate/reduce science and math requirements
2. Align core requirements more closely with major requirements
3. Eliminate/reduce language requirement
4. Add internship requirement
5. Allow for more overlapping of major and core courses

Big 10 Undergraduate Curriculum Analysis

To review the full results of the Big 10 Undergraduate Curriculum Analysis, go here.

The Big Ten Academic Alliance (BTAA), formerly the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC), is the academic consortium of the universities in the Big Ten Conference. The consortium was renamed on June 29, 2016.

The Committee on Institutional Cooperation was established by the presidents of the Big Ten members in 1958 as the conference's academic counterpart. Big Ten member institutions are predominantly major flagship research universities with large financial endowments and strong academic reputations.

Current members:

1. Indiana University
2. Michigan State University
3. Northwestern University
4. Ohio State University
5. Pennsylvania State University
6. Purdue University
7. Rutgers University
8. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
9. University of Iowa
Jonathan Dobben, PhD student, Department of Political Science, created the Big 10 Undergraduate Curriculum Analysis over the summer of 2017. The report includes the following data:

1. Undergraduate Enrollment by university
2. Undergraduate enrollment by CLA-equivalent college
3. Minimum required credits for university and college level cores
4. Number of major programs offered at each CLA-equivalent college
5. Number of minor programs offered at each CLA-equivalent college
6. Elements/structure of the college-level core curricula compared across universities
7. For each university, the following: undergraduate enrollment, CLA equivalent enrollment, entity in charge of university and college curriculum, elements of university and college curriculum, minimum number of credits for each

A very short summary of the analysis includes the following information:

1. Of the 14 institutions in the Big 10 Academic Alliance, all but one (University of Illinois) have a college-level core.
2. The College of Liberal Arts has the third lowest enrollment of the Big10AA, followed by equivalent colleges at Michigan State University and Rutgers University.
3. At 48 required credits, Purdue’s CLA is average in the number of credits required for a college-level core; Northwestern requires 72, Penn State requires only nine.
4. Of the 14 Big10AA institutions, 10 require study of a foreign language through a college-level core.

CLA Core Renewal Faculty Forum

To review the CLA Core Renewal Faculty Forum Power Point, go here.

At the March 21, 2017 CLA full faculty, Associate Dean Ebarb led shared a report of the progress of the task force and led a forum to both disseminate information and receive feedback from faculty. Information shared with the faculty included data on declining enrollments and credit hour delivery, the propensity for lower level classes to be included on both the CLA and the UCC cores, while the majority of upper level courses are on neither core. Also, the concept that diminishing CLA enrollments with continued level of offerings of CLA Core courses means that CLA units are all competing for a smaller and smaller cohort of students to meet minimum course enrollments.
Guiding questions for the forum included:

1. Does the CLA Core define the Bachelor of Arts experience for the CLA student?
2. The current CLA Core contains over 276 courses in 13 categories; is the size and composition of the core appropriate?
3. What should be the relationship between the CLA Core and the University Core?
4. There are many efforts across the college to partner with units outside of CLA. What impact does the CLA Core have on these efforts?

**CLA Core Renewal Working Group**

Beginning Fall 2017, work will begin on renewing the core curriculum, and working through the appropriate college curriculum committee processes.

The Core Renewal Working Group for 2017-2018 will include a faculty representative from each of the academic units, staff representatives from academic student advising, and student representation.

The Dean will select the working group members from a list of 2-3 faculty from each unit, submitted by the CLA heads.

The Associate Dean of Undergraduate Education will serve as co-chair alongside a member of the faculty selected from the Working Group by the Dean.

Administrative support, as needed, will be provided by the Dean’s Office.

Any revisions to the CLA Core would be submitted to the CLA Senate for approval, and then submitted to the full faculty for ratification.

**Resources**

College of Liberal Arts Core Curriculum:  
https://www.cla.purdue.edu/students/academics/requirements/core.html

Purdue University Core Curriculum:  
http://www.purdue.edu/provost/students/s-initiatives/curriculum/coreCurriculum.html

Big 10 Academic Alliance: http://www.btaa.org/home