



Reimagining the Core Curriculum (WG1)

Executive Summary: Spring 2024 Progress Update¹

This group has been charged to reflect on, research national models for, and propose a CU Denver-informed model for what makes sense to include in our “general education”/ “core curriculum” portfolio for students who declare different academic majors. The goal is to ensure our core curriculum supports a broad-based education while enhancing students’ major-specific learning and career readiness. Our core curriculum should align with the institution’s role as an equity-serving urban public research university. It also should align with emergent trends in curriculum, culture, and workforce development, as well as the demographics and tendencies of our students.

[Read full charge here.](#)

Key Work Completed

1. Current Core Review:

- Evaluated the existing 34- to 40-credit-hour core, which includes composition, math, arts, sciences, and diversity courses.
- Identified that the core has not been fundamentally revised in over 30 years.

2. Data Collection:

- Surveyed students and faculty to gauge preferences for core structure and goals. Both groups preferred a flexible core structure focused on workplace skills and civic literacy.
- Reviewed core models at peer institutions and explored strategies for integrating experiential learning and prior learning into the curriculum.
- Reviewed the Colorado Talent Pipeline Report to identify the academic and workplace skills Colorado employers value, corresponding with a 2021 AACU employer survey research report.

3. Values and Priorities:

- Identified core values such as inclusivity, transparency, and alignment with university strategy.

¹ This update does not incorporate valuable feedback received in meetings and surveys since August 2024. Prepared Oct. 21, 2024 for Nov. 6 Community Conversations event.

- Prioritized three key focus areas for the core: academic skills (e.g., critical and creative thinking), workplace skills (e.g., communication skills and creative problem-solving), and civic/sociocultural literacy (e.g., engaging multiple perspectives and groups to address pressing social problems).
- Constructed three core objectives for CU Denver graduates (those who have completed the core):
 - a. Core Objective 1: CU Denver students are engaged civic actors utilizing their knowledge in service to their communities. (an ethic of action)
 - b. Core Objective 2: CU Denver students support change efforts in a variety of environments (workplace, community, state, nation). (an ethic of advocacy)
 - c. Core Objective 3: CU Denver students perceive and consider the pressing issues of the time, informed by a wide range of perspectives and experiences. (an ethic of awareness)

4. **Workplace Skills Alignment:**

- Gathered data on workforce needs, emphasizing skills such as critical and creative thinking, communication, and teamwork.

Preliminary Recommendations

1. **Outcome-Based Core:** Focus on developing essential academic and transferable workplace skills (e.g., critical thinking, multimodal communication, collaboration).
2. **Flexible Structure:** Allow students to complete core courses throughout their degree, instead of enforcing a rigid sequence.
3. **Experiential Learning:** Integrate high-impact practices, such as capstone projects and real-world learning opportunities, to better prepare students for post-graduation success.
4. **Assessment and Transfer-Friendly:** Ensure the curriculum includes built-in assessments and remains aligned with statewide transfer agreements to facilitate degree completion.

Next Steps

- Based on Fall 2024 feedback, finalize core learning outcomes and curriculum models by.
- Simulate student pathways using CU Denver personas to ensure alignment with student needs.
- Continue refining the core based on additional feedback and data analysis.