Message from Director of University Core

Fri 11/30/2018   12:57 PM

Dear members of the SLU community,

As chairperson of the University Undergraduate Core Committee, I write to offer an update of where the work of Common Core Invention stands at our university, and to give you a sense of where the work will take us in the coming months.

In the spring of 2018, our university community together ratified a set of nine Core Student Learning Outcomes that will form the bedrock of any future SLU common core. This landmark campus-wide agreement allowed the UUCC to move forward in developing possible architectures for the delivery of a new SLU Core. We spent this past summer educating ourselves on best practices for core design, paying close attention to literature from both the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU) and the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU). In June, a team from our committee attended the AACU Summer Institute on General Education and Assessment. That conference was the starting point for developing a plan to engage the entire SLU community in generating ideas for a new common core. By August 2018, we were ready to put our plan into action.

The UUCC kicked off the fall semester with a new Undergraduate Core website, and a September guest lecture with Dr. Paul Hanstedt, nationally-recognized expert on core curricular design. We then partnered with SLU's Reinert Center to host five "Inventing Core Structures" workshops—four in St. Louis and one at SLU Madrid—that together engaged 244 members of our university community, including over fifty current SLU undergraduates, in mapping our new Core SLOs to possible core models. Most of these workshops filled to capacity and generated waitlists.

At each of these five workshops, the energy in the room was invigorating. It was striking to witness so many SLU community members joining together in cross-unit teams to collaborate on a vision for what a new core—common to all undergraduates—might at its best achieve. Other events both past and upcoming—including informal brown bag discussions with groups of faculty, students and alumni as well as our 12/4 "Designing Core Structures" workshop— continue the work of connecting SLU community members around the question of what we want our university's undergraduate experience to accomplish.

Now, the UUCC invites all members of the SLU community—faculty, staff, students, administration—to collaborate on ideas for our shared undergraduate Core. **Our Call for Core Designs is now open** (a version is also attached to this email). We invite both complete core designs **and/or** core component designs, in any form: from germinal to fully conceptualized. We have created a Core Design Toolkit to help teams and individuals in this work. This Toolkit brings together information on best practices in core design; comparative institutional models;

ideas that emerged from our Fall 2018 workshops; as well as links to lectures and readings that have informed our Core Invention process to date.

Although members of the UUCC will not formally participate on core design teams, we are available to answer questions, and to assist people in finding collaborators, locating peer institutional models, and accessing literature on best practices. You can find contact information for all members of the UUCC as well as meeting minutes [here](#).

Looking forward, our projected next steps will be:

- **February 1 - March 1, 2019:** UUCC brings together all submissions to identify points of overlap and convergence as well as common values and investments. All proposals will be made public.
- **March 1 - April 1, 2019:** UUCC synthesizes submissions into 2-3 possible models.
- **April 1 - May 19, 2019:** All members of the SLU community will be invited to submit comment and feedback on the proposed models via town halls, workshops, small group sessions, or other means.
- **May 19 - August 19, 2019:** UUCC will use all feedback to finalize a single draft architecture.
- **August 2019 - November 2019:** All members of the SLU community will be invited to submit comments, feedback and suggestions on the draft architecture. The draft model will go through an iterative process of consideration, vetting, alteration and revision.
- **December 2019:** The proposed architecture will be presented for a vote of the faculty in each college and school offering undergraduate programs.

As SLU community members, we know that any curricular change requires transparency, good will, and sufficient time and resources. Developing SLU's first-ever common core is daunting work. The UUCC welcomes frequent feedback on the process. You can access feedback forms on both our [University Undergraduate Core website](#) and on our [Core Invention Workspace](#).
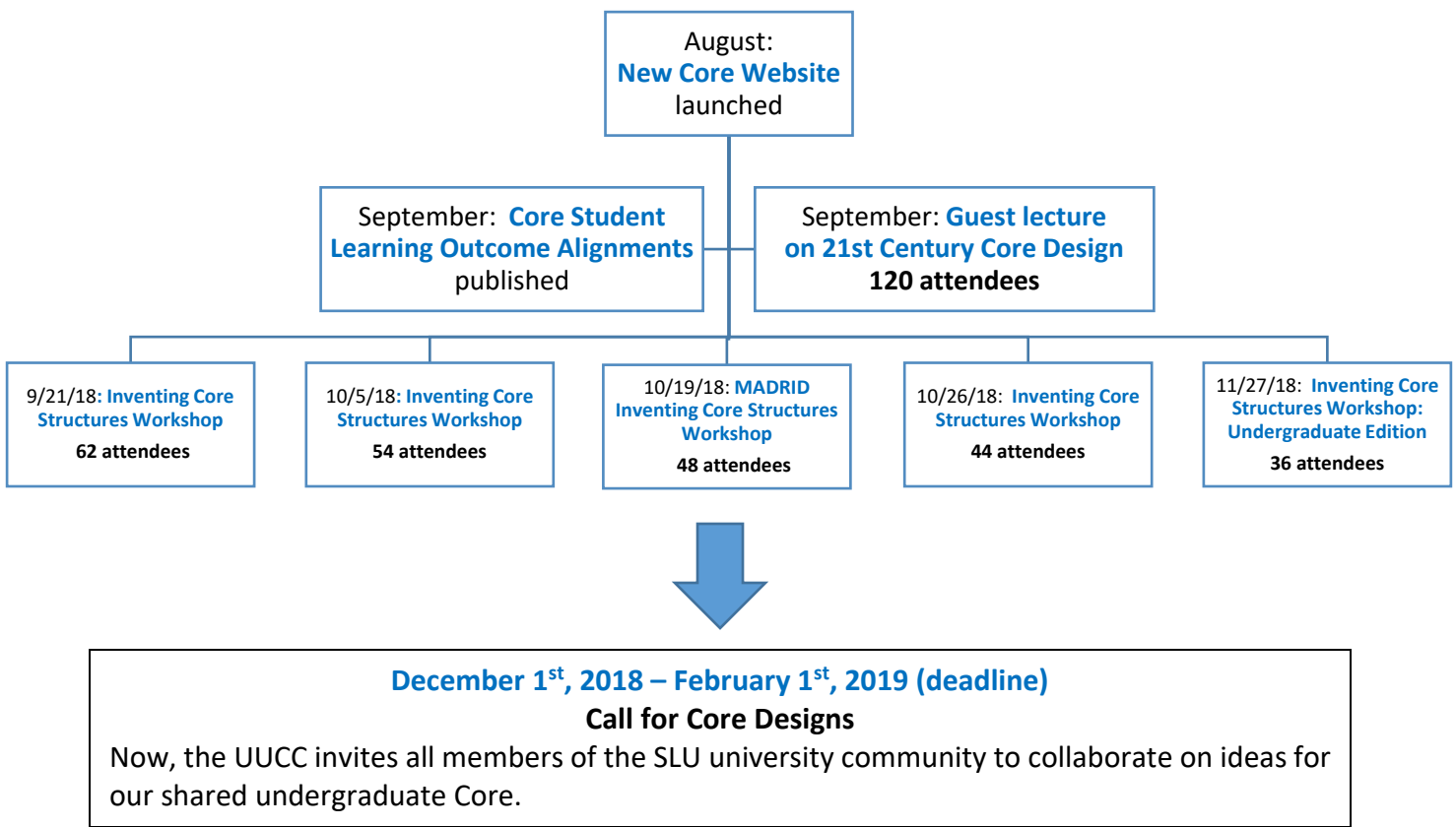
Thank you all for your continued investment in the future of SLU undergraduate education, and happy holidays!

Ellen Crowell
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Call for Core Designs

This Fall 2018 semester, the University Undergraduate Core Committee (UUCC) has hosted a range of events designed to spark awareness of and conversations about possible ways forward for a SLU Common Core.

August:
New Core Website
launched

September: **Core Student Learning Outcome Alignments** published

September: **Guest lecture on 21st Century Core Design**
120 attendees

9/21/18: **Inventing Core Structures Workshop**
62 attendees

10/5/18: **Inventing Core Structures Workshop**
54 attendees

10/19/18: **MADRID Inventing Core Structures Workshop**
48 attendees

10/26/18: **Inventing Core Structures Workshop**
44 attendees

11/27/18: **Inventing Core Structures Workshop: Undergraduate Edition**
36 attendees

December 1st, 2018 – February 1st, 2019 (deadline)
Call for Core Designs
Now, the UUCC invites all members of the SLU university community to collaborate on ideas for our shared undergraduate Core.

The UUCC invites both:
      (1) complete core designs **and/or**
      (2) core component designs

Complete core designs:
Colleagues might propose a complete core design that takes a student all the way from matriculation to graduation.

Core components:
Alternately, colleagues might design one discrete common core component: for example, a common intellectual experience such as a freshman or sophomore-year seminar, or a capstone or signature work component.

Visual Component:
The university is working to craft a SLU Common Core that immediately and persuasively communicates a clear vision for the SLU undergraduate experience. To that end, a visual representation is **required** for complete core design submissions, and is **optional** for core component submissions.

Guidelines for submission

All SLU community members are invited to collaborate on models for a SLU common core. The UUCC recommends that proposals emerge from multidisciplinary teams across colleges and units; however, individual proposals are welcome. All submissions will be anonymized before being circulated to UUCC members.

Complete core designs should include:
- A written description of the proposed architecture that:
    - Articulates the central guiding principle(s) behind the core architectural model
    - Indicates how a student would move through the model
    - Shows how the model maps onto our SLU Core Student Learning Outcomes
- A visual representation of the proposed architecture **(required)**

Core component designs should include:
- A written description of the core component that:
    - Articulates the central guiding principle(s) behind the component
    - Indicates where within a four-year curriculum the proposed component would be situated
    - Shows how the proposed component maps onto our SLU Core Student Learning Outcomes
- A visual representation of the proposed core component **(optional)**

Core Design Resources

Core Invention Workspace
Both complete core designs and core component designs should strive to clearly demonstrate how they are rooted in our new SLU Core SLOs and in best practices for 21st century undergraduate general education. To help facilitate this work, the UUCC has created a Core Invention Workspace, where those working on core models will find a range of materials to draw upon, including: SLU's new Core Student Learning Outcomes; core curricular models from peer institutions, draft architectural models and ideas that emerged from our Fall 2018 Core Invention workshops; literature on best practices for general education design; and recorded lectures.

Click Here to submit your proposals (due February 1, 2019)

Looking forward

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