

Revising UAB's Core Curriculum

UA System Board of Trustees, June 2020

UAB's undergraduate core curriculum has remained essentially the same since the university awarded its first undergraduate degree in 1969. In the intervening 50 years, many other things have changed: the nature of the workforce; the national and international profile of the university; and the expectations of employers, students and parents. "[Forging the Future](#)," UAB's strategic plan, calls for the establishment of a revised core, the Signature Core Curriculum, to provide an improved foundation for undergraduate study and for ongoing success.

The [Signature Core Curriculum Committee](#) has worked for over two years to develop a new curriculum. Our proposed curriculum helps students develop a keener sense of the world around them and their own potential as engaged citizens. By teaching habits of lifelong learning and community engagement, the core should teach students how to contribute in vital, ongoing ways to their personal and professional communities.

Overview of Proposed Changes

- The overall size of the core curriculum remains unchanged at 41 credit hours.
- The new curricular structure is more open, meaning that more units have the option to propose core courses.
- The curriculum has two main components that provide both the breadth and depth needed for a changing workforce:
 - [Academic Foundations](#) provides competency-based learning in four areas: written composition, non-written communication, quantitative literacy, and reasoning.
 - [Thinking Broadly](#) ensures disciplinary breadth with requirements in History and Meaning; the Creative Arts; Scientific Inquiry; and Humans and Their Societies.
- A "core capstone" called City as Classroom will encourage students to use local/state/regional realities as a lens for thinking about larger national and global issues (e.g., the New South economy, human rights in Birmingham, health in Alabama, etc.).
- "Flags" will be attached to courses that contain certain kinds of content. Students will collect the following flags before graduation: global/multicultural, sustainability, high-impact practices, writing.
- An improved orientation will provide a better foundation for succeeding as a college student.
- An optional badging system will allow students to demonstrate competencies that cross the curricular/co-curricular divide and that enhance employability (e.g., leadership, civic awareness, technology, etc.)

Other Features

[Teaching](#): A three-year Core Fellows program, funded through a Strategic Investment grant, provides support and training for faculty teaching in the core. Currently 25 faculty are in the first cohort.

[Governance](#): A Core Director will have general oversight of the core curriculum and will work with an advisory committee established in conjunction with the Faculty Senate.

[Transfer Students](#): This proposed curriculum is 'transfer friendly.' However, the Core Director will consult with appropriate offices at UAB and elsewhere to identify remaining issues and resolve them generously in the students' favor.

[Assessment](#): Faculty teams will assess student learning outcomes to meet new SACSCOC accreditation requirements.

[Timeline](#): Our goal is for students entering fall 2022 to come in under the new curriculum.