

The History of the CORE

As part of on-going improvements to academic offerings and to foster the movement toward becoming a premiere Christian liberal arts institution, the ACU Academic Dean proposed revising the school's General Studies program. In spring 2012, a Liberal Arts Task Force was formed and charged to develop a new curriculum that would better reflect the new name and mission of the university. **This CORE: Christian Liberal Arts is the result of that charge.**

The ACU CORE: Christian Liberal Arts is the product of a two-year, community wide collaborative process that started in the spring of 2012, with the first meeting of the Liberal Arts Task Force. The Liberal Arts Task Force was charged with reviewing the University's current General Studies curriculum, and from that review, to engage the ACU community and propose new General Studies requirements designed to meet the needs of 21st Century learners. The Task Force was required to develop a proposal that would include an updated philosophy of General Studies, a curriculum aligned to the mission and vision of the University, clear program learning outcomes and an assessment plan to measure the degree to which students are achieving the learning outcomes, and an implementation plan for the revised program. The goal for launch was set for the Fall of 2014.

As the Liberal Arts Task Force began its work, asking members of the ACU community what was needed or desired in a general education program for the future of the University, a number of guiding principles arose from this community collaboration:

With input from the ACU community, it became clear that the LATF should

- Create a Christian Liberal Arts curriculum that would build on the foundation of ACU's first 50 years – the best the University already does – while creating a new defining academic Christian liberal arts curriculum that matched the University's vision and mission for the next 50 years.

For the next year and a half, the Liberal Arts Task force facilitated a campus-wide discussion of the question:

- How can a Christian liberal arts curriculum be best adapted to our unique context? The Liberal Arts Task Force was committed to guiding a collaborative, open process marked by community engagement in every step of the process, and yet informed by current research and data as to best practices, learning models, and other relevant considerations.

The Liberal Arts Task Force

The Liberal Arts Task Force had seven members—a faculty chair, three other faculty members, the Vice President for Enrollment and Marketing, the Registrar, and the Academic Dean. The four faculty members—Dr. Tracy F. Munsil (Political Science), chair; Dr. Warren Pettitt (Science and Math); Dr. Carolyn Pela (Behavioral Health, Family Studies, Psychology); and Dr. Paul A. Creasman (Communication)—comprised the Liberal Arts Task Force *Working Group*—which facilitated the creation of the new curriculum proposal.

The Liberal Arts Task Force Working Group began meeting in February 2012. In preparation for their task, the group reviewed key texts in liberal arts philosophy, leading documents in best practices, prominent websites concerning university core curricula, and the practices of other institutions that have undergone general studies program revisions. In May 2012, the working group began to forge the curriculum plan itself, utilizing a “backwards design” approach, meaning, the working group identified university-wide learning outcomes first and from those outcomes, developed assessment measures and finally, individual courses.

The work of the Liberal Arts Task Force Working Group was a collaborative process, with the Working Group engaging with the university community in various ways and at specific junctures. The working group polled the entire university faculty concerning preferred learning outcomes; sought input from the faculty concerning potential assessment measures; met individually with key department chairs; and shared in-progress updates with the full committee and full academic community several times during their process. Meeting minutes and other documents related to the work of the working group have been regularly made available to the campus community via the shared network drive.

On the next page, you can see the many steps in the process of developing the CORE.

THE LATF PROCESS: How We Got Here:

The chart below the steps in developing the new ACU CORE Liberal Arts Curriculum:

