



December 5, 2014

A Letter of Grave Concern

We, the undersigned, wish to express our deep concern about Objectives 3c and 4c of the present university core curriculum being eliminated in the new university core.

It is our understanding that the integrating themes part of the new core was created in part to allow programs laboring under stringent accreditation requirements a degree of flexibility in satisfying core requirements.

However, we are concerned that the elimination of Objectives 3c and 4c would be going a step too far.

Eliminating Objective 3c (the natural science and social science elective) would result in decreased exposure to the application of the scientific method, which would be a disservice to the general education of all of our students and cast the University in a bad light at a time when STEM education is in high demand. Furthermore, the reduced exposure to the social sciences would further disadvantage graduates since these sciences offer a broad scope of knowledge of both the individual and society as a whole.

Eliminating Objective 4c (the philosophy and religious studies elective) would give us among the weakest philosophy and religious studies requirements of all Jesuit-sponsored universities, would undermine our distinctive identity as a Catholic university, and would shortchange our students who pay a higher tuition in order to engage in this distinctive kind of education that vows to educate the whole person. We are concerned that students not just have a superficial acquaintance with a number of ideas and content areas, but also engage this material in depth. In a rapidly changing and increasingly diverse world that continues to undergo various crises of values, diminishing exposure to those disciplines traditionally concerned with addressing issues of values and transcendence would be unwise.

All of these disciplines inculcate in students habits of mind that are essential to understanding the larger world at the most fundamental levels. Without sufficient exposure to them, it is hard to see how the University could possibly fulfill its stated mission of integrating “the intellectual, spiritual, ethical, and social development of students.”

We therefore address this appeal to you, the ranking members of the University community charged with safeguarding the curricular integrity of this institution, and respectfully ask you to give it your full and serious attention.

Mark A. Benvenuto
Professor and Chair,
Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry

Simon J. Hendry, S.J.
Director,
Catholic Studies Program

David R. Koukal
Professor and Chair,
Department of Philosophy

Stephen Manning
Associate Professor and Chair,
Department of Political Science

Raphael Shen, S.J.
Professor and Chair,
Department of Economics

Linda H. Slowik
Associate Professor and Chair,
Department of Psychology

James B. Tubbs
Professor and Chair,
Department of Religious Studies

Aloha VanCamp
Associate Professor and Chair,
Department of Social Work, Sociology,
and Human Services