

Motion: That objectives 3c and 4c of the present UDM core curriculum be retained in the new UDM core curriculum.

I argue against the elimination of objectives 3c and 4c on the following grounds:

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 UDM 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. I am 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.

Furthermore, it has always been my understanding that 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. Eliminating Objectives 3c and 4c would be going a step too far.

As I survey how the new core is evolving, a significant number of disciplines will be maintaining the same level of presence as in the old core: English, communication studies, the fine and performing arts, and history. If Objectives 3c and 4c were to be eliminated, this would mean that students would have less exposure to philosophy, religious studies, and the natural and social sciences in the core.

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.”