

Whereas the Faculty Senate of the University of Southern Maine has said that general education at USM must be a coherent, integrative, and rigorous liberal education that is both inclusive and practical, enabling our graduates to be world-minded, intentional, life-long learners, a new curriculum for General Education is outlined below. This curriculum both illuminates and transcends the perspectives of various disciplines and systematically fosters the values, dispositions, knowledge, and skills essential for student success after college:

1. informed understandings of human cultures and the natural world;
2. analytical, contextual, and holistic thinking about complex issues;
3. effective communication using multiple literacies and forms of expression;
4. critical reflection upon, and informed action in, their roles as citizens, family members, consumers, and producers; and
5. ethical action to maintain their own health and contribute to the social, environmental, and economic welfare of local and global communities.

*Resolved:*

I. That a *USM Core Curriculum*, together with a new set of general education requirements, shall be established to replace the existing Core Curriculum and undergraduate requirements. The *USM Core Curriculum* will serve the criteria, goals, and objectives of a general education at USM as delineated in the 2005 "Guidelines and Criteria for General Education at USM." Entry Year Courses shall be required beginning Fall 2009. Current core courses will continue to run during and after implementation. During the first three-years of implementation department Chairs will recommend to the Core Curriculum Committee which of their existing Core curriculum courses satisfy the Socio-Cultural Analysis, Cultural Interpretation, Creative Expression, and Science Explorations requirements. At the end of the three-year period, current core courses must be approved by the Core Curriculum Committee to continue to fulfill a requirement in the *USM Core Curriculum*. To accommodate students who matriculated prior to 2009, classes in the new core may also carry old Core letter designations until 2018. Faculty Senate will consider approving other new requirements in the proposed *USM Core Curriculum* as lists of approved courses are presented to it in future. New requirements shall be described in the Undergraduate Catalog as they are approved by Faculty Senate.

A. The *USM Core Curriculum* when fully implemented shall consist of a minimum of 39 credit hours taken in at least 12 courses beginning with the Entry Year Experience and continuing through to the Capstone. In addition, students must take a diversity-designated course at some point during their undergraduate career, as described below. All core curriculum courses will be taught to the extent practicable in interactive formats that provide students an opportunity to discuss the material with faculty teaching the class and, where relevant and appropriate, may include co-curricular activities as determined by the instructor. These requirements, their sequencing, and requirements for transfer

students are described fully in the "USM Core Curriculum Description" except as modified here and summarized below:

1. Entry Year Experience introduces competing perspectives on human cultures and the natural world in different contexts and examines multiple disciplinary perspectives about them. Must be completed prior to enrollment in Creative Expression, Cultural Interpretation, Socio-cultural Analysis, and Science Exploration. Those who have not satisfied their college writing requirement must enroll in a college writing course at the same time as they are enrolled in EYE.
2. College Writing introduces the practices, habits, conventions and skills of college literacy and intellectual inquiry, providing opportunities for students to learn how thinking and language develop and change through drafting, revision, critical engagement with other writers and readers, re-reading, editing, and proofreading. Must be completed prior to enrollment in Creative Expression, Cultural Interpretation, Socio-cultural Analysis, and Science Exploration.
3. Quantitative Reasoning introduces mathematical concepts and skills necessary for everyday life and successful completion of a chosen field of study, including critical thinking, mathematical reasoning, the use of technological tools, computation, interpretation, inquiry, and application of mathematical concepts to issues and problems in the contemporary world. Must be completed during the first 30 credits of study and prior to enrollment in Science Exploration courses.
4. Creative Expression engages students in the creative process, developing talents and interests in the arts while fostering the associated skills they will use in other aspects of their lives. Prerequisites: EYE course and College Writing.
5. Cultural Interpretation engages students in the critical analysis, interpretation, and evaluation of cultural representations and practices in relation to the historical context that produced them or in which they are made meaningful. Prerequisites: EYE course and College Writing.
6. Socio-cultural Analysis engages students in the study of socio-cultural systems and phenomena with a broad historical and cultural perspective, and in the evaluation and use of theories and conceptual frameworks that shed light on human behaviors in social contexts. Prerequisites: EYE course and College Writing.
7. Science Exploration engages students in the study of science including how science knowledge is created and interpreted through experiment, observation and critical evaluation. Science literacy and quantitative reasoning skills will be developed as tools to interpret and apply often conflicting scientific findings, exploring the extent to which science is a successful knowledge system relevant to daily life. Prerequisites: EYE course and College Writing.
8. Integrative Seminar requires students to frame, analyze, and evaluate ethical issues, dilemmas, and actions, including their own action. Engages students in critical reflection on their roles as citizens, family members, producers, and consumers. Prerequisites: EYE course, College Writing, and any three the following: Creative Expression, Cultural

Interpretation, Socio-cultural Analysis, Science Exploration. Integrative Seminar may be taken concurrently with courses in the Thematic Cluster.

9. Thematic Cluster: Students must complete three thematically-related courses (200-level or above) from approved groups that juxtapose competing and complementary ways of framing complex issues and problems in a way that encourages integration of learning. Minors of at least 15 credits outside the student's major may substitute for the thematic cluster. Courses in a Thematic Cluster may be taken concurrently with the Integrative Seminar. Transfer students must complete at least one cluster course at USM.

10. Capstone integrates disciplinary learning with general education and the perspectives of other disciplines and with life, career, and citizenship. Capstones may be taken concurrently with cluster courses or a minor. Prerequisite: Integrative Seminar.

11. Diversity Requirement: Engages students in critical examination of and self-reflection on issues of difference and diversity. Develops theoretical sophistication about issues related to diversity and fosters interpersonal skills necessary for understanding and working with diverse populations within the U.S. and in other parts of the world. Designated diversity courses may be completed within the USM Core, the major or minor, or university electives.

B. Transfer Student Requirements: Students entering USM with fewer than 24 semester credits are required to complete all levels of the *USM Core*, including the Entry Year Experience, either with transfer credits, advanced placement (AP) credits, or by completing appropriate USM courses. Students entering with 24 or more semester credits must complete all *USM Core* requirements except the Entry Year Experience either through appropriate transfer credits, AP credits, or by completing the requirement at USM. All students must complete the Integrative Seminar and the Capstone at USM.

II. That assessment of the *USM Core Curriculum* shall be conducted for program evaluation at entry, mid, and concluding points in the curriculum, and that no data for any assessment shall be disaggregated to the level of individual courses or faculty. Student course evaluations shall be administered separately from these assessments.

III. That upon Faculty Senate approval of this motion, the existing Core Curriculum Committee shall be replaced by a USM Core Curriculum Committee comprised of eleven voting faculty members serving staggered two year terms, selected from full time faculty as follows: one from each College of Arts & Sciences (CAS) division (Humanities, Fine Arts, Social Sciences, and Math/Science); three at-large from CAS, (one of which shall be a part-time faculty member); one each from the School of Business, College of Education and Human Development, School of Applied Science, Engineering & Technology, and the College of Nursing and Health Professions. The eleven faculty representatives shall be nominated by election by their respective colleges or schools and appointed by the Chair of Faculty Senate, and shall elect a chair or co-chairs from among the full-time faculty committee members to serve a two-year term. In addition, the committee shall include no more than three non-voting representatives from appropriate administrative units nominated by the Provost and appointed by the Chair of Faculty Senate. Current General Education Planning Group members will serve on an interim

basis as the USM Core Curriculum Committee until November 1, 2009, or until such time as nomination and appointment of a new USM Core Curriculum Committee shall be completed, if sooner; interim appointments may be made as necessary by the Chair of Faculty Senate to fill any vacancies. The USM Core Curriculum Committee shall be responsible for approving proposed courses and reviewing them periodically; providing assistance with transfer reviews; overseeing assessment; identifying faculty development needs; and overseeing policies and procedures. Review and approval of courses for inclusion in the *USM Core Curriculum* shall respect and give appropriate deference to the expertise and academic freedom of individual faculty to teach what they know and to determine the content, pedagogy, required student activities, and teaching practices of each course.

IV. That the Chair of Faculty Senate shall appoint an independent faculty committee comprised of members selected from full time faculty as follows: one from each College of Arts & Sciences division (Humanities, Fine Arts, Social Sciences, and Math/Science); one each from the School of Business, College of Education and Human Development, School of Applied Science, Engineering & Technology, and the College of Nursing and Health Professions; and one part-time faculty member. This committee shall elect a chair from among its full-time faculty members. Drawing on a self-study prepared by the General Education Council and such information as can be acquired through holding open, campus-wide public hearings, the committee shall conduct a program evaluation of the *USM Core Curriculum* and its curricular requirements, including definitions of the requirements and criteria for courses offered in each area, within five years of the program's inception, with a written report presented to Faculty Senate no later than October 2015.