University of Florida
Core Curriculum Committee Report

January 2025

Table of Contents

Members of the Faculty Committee

Sarah D. Lynne	Family, Youth and Community Sciences, College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, Chair
Jeremiah Blanchard	Department of Engineering Education, Herbert Wertheim College of Engineering
Taryrn Brown	School of Teaching and Learning, College of Education
Jennifer Dasher	School of Theatre + Dance, College of the Arts
David Julian	Department of Biology, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Lora Levett	Department of Sociology and Criminology & Law, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Michael Marsiske	Department of Clinical and Health Psychology, College of Public Health and Health Professions
Monica Oli	Department of Microbiology & Cell Science, College of Agricultural and Life Sciences
Catia Silva	Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering, Herbert Wertheim College of Engineering
Ruth Steiner	Department of Urban and Regional Planning, College of Design, Construction and Planning
Sevan Terzian	School of Teaching and Learning, College of Education

The Faculty Committee on the UF Core Curriculum would like to add a note of appreciation to faculty, staff, students, department chairs, dean's offices, Office of the Provost, Office of the Registrar, Academic Assessment Committee, Office of Student Affairs, General Education Committee, and Quest Leaders for your engagement in this process.

The Charge of the Faculty Committee on UF Core Curriculum

The Faculty Committee on the UF Core Curriculum was charged by the president to provide insights on how the University of Florida Core Curriculum uniquely positions our students to live lives well lived in an increasingly disruptive age. Specifically, we are to describe the primary purpose(s) of the current UF Core Curriculum, evaluate through objective measures how effective the current UF Core Curriculum is at achieving these purposes, and consider alternative UF Core Curriculum models (e.g., dual core) including primary purposes of alternative models and objective indicators of meeting these purposes.

Committee Process

On December 14th, 2023, President Ben Sasse spoke to the University of Florida Faculty Senate via video and provided the initial request for a report on the UF Core Curriculum and consideration of an alternative Dual Core model ([President Ben Sasse December UF Senate Video](#)). Dr. Sarah Lynne, chair-elect of the UF Faculty Senate was appointed chair of the Faculty Committee on the UF Core Curriculum.

In March 2024, a committee of 11 faculty members was assembled by Chair Lynne. The members of this committee were selected with the goal of having representation from most of the Colleges at UF with an undergraduate education program. Members of the committee included instructional faculty, tenure-track faculty, tenured faculty, faculty with experience as UF Preview Advisors, faculty who served as Undergraduate Coordinators, and faculty with experience in the student transfer process at UF. Members of the faculty committee were not selected to contribute their professional or personal opinions. The purposeful selection of committee members was aimed at providing a robust scope of experience with which to inform lines of inquiry. Committee members engaged with individuals across the campus community with vested interest in UF's Core Curriculum. It was through the engagement of the faculty committee with the UF community that this committee fulfilled its charge.

On March 18th, 2024 the faculty committee held its launch meeting during which President Sasse gave the committee its charge. The committee began its work immediately, outlining the full scope of activities and dividing these activities amongst members of the committee. Three subgroups were formed that focused on benchmarking, data-driven metrics, and engagement with the UF community. Committee members completed activities from March – June 2024. A draft of this report was outlined between June – September 2024.

On October 15th, 2024 a draft report was shared with the Office of the Provost. The final report was shared with administrative leaders and the UF campus community in January 2025.

Summary of Findings

1.   UF Core Curriculum First Principles

Overview of Undergraduate Degree Requirements and definition of UF Core

To complete their undergraduate degree, students must complete 120 credit hours. Those credit hours are broken into four categories of credit hours: UF Core/General Education Requirements, College Requirements, Major Requirements, and Elective Requirements. How many credit hours a student completes in each category during their time at UF is dependent on their incoming credit, how much time they want to spend at UF, the number of credits required for their college and major requirements, and how efficient they are in moving through their degree requirements.

As part of those general education requirements, most students will complete UF Quest. UF Quest consists of a sequential sequence of courses in which they engage with essential questions in humanities (Quest 1) and engage with pressing questions in the natural or social sciences (Quest 2). Currently, Quest 1 and 2 are required, and plans are underway for adding Quest 3 (engagement in the world through experiential learning) and an optional Quest 4 (synthesis of UF Quest experience with discipline) (see current quest requirements and program for workshop on Quest 3).

For the purposes of this repot, we define the UF Core as follows:

The UF Core consists of the course requirements all UF students must satisfy before graduation, regardless of major. Currently, the state general education requirements and the UF general education requirements, including Quest requirements. Currently, students take Quest 1 and 2 courses. Future plans include Quest 3 and 4 requirements. An overview of the requirements for the UF Core appears below.

Current UF Core: State and UF General Education Course Requirements

Students complete 36 hours of UF Core General Education Requirements in the areas of Biological and Physical Sciences (6 credit hours), Composition (6 credit hours), Humanities (6 credit hours), Mathematics (6 credit hours), and additional coursework from Biological, Physical, or Social Sciences or Humanities.

Students must also complete courses with an International and Diversity focus (3 credit hours each), completed in conjunction with another Biological, Physical, or Social Sciences or Humanities course. Students must also complete Quest courses (6 credit hours). Quest requirements are completed in conjunction with Humanities (3 hours) and Biological, Physical, or Social Sciences (3 hours).

Table 1: UF Core: State and UF General Education Course Requirements

Requirement	Subject Area	State Core Credit Hours	UF General Education Credit Hours	Total Credit Hours
Core	Biological & Physical Sciences (B or P)	3	3 (must choose this or H as Quest 2)	6
Core	Composition (C)	3	3	6
Core	Humanities (H)	3	3 (**must** be Quest 1)	6
Core	Social & Behavioral Sciences (S)	3	3 (must choose this or B/P as Quest 2)	6
Core	Mathematics (M)	3	3	6
Core	Additional Coursework from S, P, B, or H	0	6	6
Additional	International (N)	0	3 (taken with S, P, B, H)	3*
Additional	Diversity (D)	0	3 (taken with S, P, B, H)	3*
				36

*Does not count toward total because N and D may be taken with another General Education Area

Rules:
1. All General Education courses must be completed with a C or higher.
2. The only courses that can appear twice on the chart are N and D courses because they are always taken in conjunction with another General Education area
3. Some courses are approved to count in two core areas (e.g., C or H, P or B). The student must choose which area.
4. Major and college requirements *may overlap* with University/State General Education Requirements
5. Innovation Academy students are exempt from Quest 1 and Quest 2
6. 3 of the mathematics credit hours must be from a math course with prefix MAC, MAP, MAS, MGF, or MHF (i.e., "pure math").
7. Students who earned an A.A. degree from a Florida public state college of university are exempt from these requirements.
8. Incoming credit from exams or transfer courses may count toward these requirements.

Current UF Core: Writing Requirement (State Requirement)

All undergraduate students are required to complete the writing requirement, or courses that involve a substantial amount of writing. Courses may be designated as 2K, 4K, or 6K words, and students must take courses totally 24K words prior to graduation. Writing requirement courses may be taken with other general education areas. Incoming credit from exams or courses transferred into UF may count toward the writing requirement. Students who earned an A.A. degree from a Florida public state college of university are exempt from these requirements.

Current UF Core: Civic Literacy Requirement (State Requirement)

Students must complete course requirements and pass a state civic literacy exam to satisfy the civic literacy requirement. They take AMH2010, AMH2020 or POS2041, and these courses may also count toward State and UF General Education Course Requirements (both courses count as State Core or UF General Education Social Science credit). Students may satisfy course requirements with exam credit or transfer credit if the courses were taken at Florida institutions since Fall 2018. Students who earned an A.A. degree from a Florida public state college or university are exempt from these requirements.

Legal Context of General Education

General education is governed by regulations established by the Board of Governors in the State of Florida. Those regulations require "36 semester hours of general education courses in communication, mathematics, social sciences, humanities, and natural sciences" (Florida Department of Education, 2024). Legally, students who earn an Articulated AA or have a General Education Requirements Met (GERM) Statement from a Florida Public Post-Secondary Institution are exempt from any UF Core Requirements (See here for a link to the Florida statutes delineating the articulation agreement).

Similarly, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges has general education requirements for accreditation, delineating that the institution must require general education based on a coherent rationale, is a substantial component of the undergraduate degree program, and ensures breadth of knowledge, requiring at least one course from humanities/fine arts, social/behavioral science, and natural science/mathematics (SACSCOC, 2024)

General Education Over Time

To track general education changes over time, we explored the undergraduate catalogs over the past several years. State core, civic literacy, and quest requirements have all developed and changed over the past 10-12 years. In addition, UF instituted a common reading program through the Office of New Student and Family Programs in 2007. This program is no longer functioning. While not an academic requirement, the common reading program was designed to provide a common academic and enriching student experience, so we reference it here.

State Core

The State Core was introduced in Fall 2015, and included a requirement that students take Composition, Mathematics, Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences, ad Humanities Courses (3 credit hours each). The courses eligible were designated by the Board of Governors and have changed over time. In Fall 2017 and Fall 2023, the list changed to include additional composition courses (END2210 and ENC 1145, respectively). Beginning Fall 2024, AMH2010 will be added to the social and behavioral sciences course and SYG2000 will be removed. Incoming credit from exams, dual enrollment, or transfer courses may satisfy these requirements.

Table 2: State Core General Education Courses

Biological and Physical Sciences	Composition	State Core Mathematics	Humanities	Social and Behavioral Sciences
AST 1002 Discovering the Universe (P)	ENC 1101 Expository and Argumentative Writing	MAC 1105 Basic College Algebra	ARH 2000 Art Appreciation: American Diversity and Global Arts (also GE-D)	[d]AMH2010 United States to 1877
AST 3018 Astronomy and Astrophysics 1 (P)	ENC 1102 Argument and Persuasion	MAC 1140 Precalculus Algebra	LIT 2000 Introduction to Literature	AMH 2020 United States since 1877 (also GE-D)
AST 3019 Astronomy and Astrophysics 2 (P)	[b]ENC 2210 Analytical Writing and Thinking	MAC 1147 Precalculus: Algebra and Trigonometry	MUL 2010 Introduction to Music Literature (also GE-N)	ANT 2000 General Anthropology
BOT 2011C Plant Diversity (B)	[c]ENC 1145 Topics for Composition	MAC 2233 Survey of Calculus 1	PHI 2010 Introduction to Philosophy	ECO 2013 Principles of Macroeconomics
BSC 2005 Biological Sciences (B)	ENC 2210 Technical Writing	MAC 2311 Analytic Geometry and Calculus 1	THE 2000 Theatre Appreciation (also GE-D)	POS 2041 American Federal Government
BSC 2010 Integrated Principles of Biology 1 (B)	ENC 3246 Professional Communication for Engineers	MAC 2312 Analytic Geometry and Calculus 2		PSY 2012 General Psychology
CHM 1020 Chemistry for the Liberal Arts (P)	ENC 3254 Professional Writing in the Discipline	MGF 1106 Mathematics for Liberal Arts Majors 1		[e]SYG 2000 Principles of Sociology
CHM 2045 General Chemistry 1 (P)	ENC 3453 Writing in the Health Professions	MGF 1107 Mathematics for Liberal Arts Majors 2		
CHM 2046 General Chemistry 2 (P)	ENC 3464 Writing in the Social Sciences	STA 2023 Introduction to Statistics 1		
CHM 2051 Honors General Chemistry 2 (P)	ENC 3465 Writing in the Law			
CHM 2096 Chemistry for Engineers 2 (P)				
ESC 1000 Introduction to Earth Science (P)				
PHY 2020 Introduction to Principles of Physics (P)				

PHY 2048 Physics with Calculus 1 (P)				
PHY 2049 Physics with Calculus 2 (P)				
PHY 2053 Physics 1 (P)				
PHY 2054 Physics 2 (P)				
[a]EVR 2001 Introduction to Environmental Science (B or P)				

a Added to UF Curriculum Fall 2016
b Added to State Core Fall 2017
c Added to State Core Fall 2023
d Added to State Core Fall 2024
e Deleted from State Core Fall 2024

Civic Literacy

Civic literacy was added in Fall 2018 and included the requirement that students complete AMH2020 or POS2041 (taken after Fall 2018) *or* complete an exam (AP Government and Politics, AP US History, CLEP American Government, State University Systems Civic Literacy Exam, Florida Civic Literacy Examination). In Summer B 2021, this changed to completing both the course and the exam ([requirements here](#)). In Summer B 2024, AMH2010 was added to the course list to satisfy this requirement.

Quest

Quest has evolved over the past 14 years. Prior to 2012, students took one State Core Humanities Course (3 credit hours) and one additional UF General Education Humanities Course (3 credit hours) taken from any of the General Education Humanities Course. We introduced the requirement that students take HUM2305, 'What is the Good Life' in [Fall 2012](#). Students took HUM2305 instead of the additional Humanities course. They could still take additional Humanities courses as part of their additional General Education requirement.

This was termed the UF Core in [Fall 2015](#), and evolved into the 'Quest 1' program in [Fall 2021](#). Students now choose from a variety of courses they can complete to satisfy the requirement.

Also in [Fall 2021](#), Quest 2 was introduced. To complete the Quest 2 requirement, students chose a Quest 2 course to complete during year 2 of study. The Quest 2 courses have a Biological, Physical, or Social Science designation and are completed as the UF General Education requirement.

Future plans for Quest include Quest 3 and 4. [Quest 3](#) will include experiential learning through internships or co-ops, study abroad, community service, research, public service, or design competitions. [Quest 4](#) is intended to provide a synthesis of the UF Quest experiences within the student's discipline.

Common Reading Program

In 2007, New Student and Family Programs at UF created a [Common Reading Program](#). The initiative was designed to "provide a common learning experience for the entire campus community, and in particular, new first year student". Participation was not mandatory, but the chosen book was distributed to all first year students. Administration recommended faculty use the book in classes and informal discussions, and events for the campus community were organized around the book (a visit from the author, lectures, discussion groups, etc.). This program was run as late as 2017, but appears to now be defunct.

2. Benchmarking with Peers and Aspirational Peers

Institutions Surveyed
The institutions that were examined for this report were (a) on UF's aspirational peer list, and/or (b) were AAU/Land Grant institutions, similar to UF.
The final list of institutions considered were:

- Cornell University
- Georgia Institute of Technology
- Ohio State University
- Pennsylvania State University
- Purdue
- University of California, Berkeley
- University of California, Davis
- University of California, Irvine
- University of California, San Diego
- University of California, Santa Barbara
- University of California, Los Angeles
- University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
- University of Maryland, College Park
- University of Michigan
- University of Minnesota Twin Cities
- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- University of Texas at Austin
- University of Virginia
- University of Wisconsin –Madison

Data Sources
We examined publicly available information about "General Education" and/or "Core Curriculum". We focused on (a) information about general education requirements (including State/University/major-specific requirements), (b) information about a core curriculum (here defined as a universal set of shared experiences in common to all students), (c) number of credits required, and (d) any information about rationale/vision/goals for the general education requirements.

Research Questions
The committee was driven by four research questions: (1) Across institutions, what are the similarities and differences in the rationales for general education/core curriculum? (2) Across institutions, what are the similarities and differences in the organization/structure of general education/core curriculum? (3) Is there any evidence for dual core/quad core (as described by President Sasse) in the benchmark institutions? (4) Did any features at any specific institution stand out as particularly noteworthy for UF to consider in any revisions of its Core?

Rationale for General Education
Across the schools surveyed, we noticed four major **similarities** in rationale: (a) *Foundational Skills*: Many institutions, such as UCLA and the University of Virginia, emphasize foundational skills. These skills often include writing, critical thinking, and breadth of knowledge across various disciplines. (b) *Breadth of Knowledge*: Institutions like the University of California, Davis and Purdue emphasize a broad-based education, often requiring students to take courses outside their major field of study to ensure a well-rounded education. (c) *Critical Thinking and Problem Solving*: Schools like the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Georgia Institute of Technology, and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign stress the importance of developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills. (d) *Preparation for Life-long Learning*:

Several institutions, including the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Georgia Institute of Technology, highlight the importance of preparing students for lifelong learning. Major **differences** between institutions in rationale included: (a) *Specific Course Requirements*: Some institutions have very specific course requirements. For example, the University of California, Berkeley requires all incoming freshmen to satisfy the Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR) and has specific requirements related to American history and institutions. (b) *Focus on Diversity and Global Learning*: While many institutions value diversity and global learning, some, like the University of Maryland, and Pennsylvania State University, explicitly state this in their rationales. (c) *Integration of Disciplines*: Some schools, like the University of California, Santa Barbara and Pennsylvania State University, emphasize integrative thinking and the ability to synthesize knowledge across multiple domains. (d) *Ethical Reasoning and Social Responsibility*: Institutions like Pennsylvania State University and the University of Wisconsin-Madison place a strong emphasis on ethical reasoning and social responsibility.

Organization and Structure of General Education
Organizationally, the major **similarities** observed included: (a) Most institutions require courses in *Arts & Humanities, Society & Culture, and Life/Physical Sciences*; (b) Many universities have a *breadth or distribution requirement* that spans multiple disciplines; (c) *Writing and composition* are required across most institutions; (d) There is often an *emphasis on diversity, cultural understanding, or global perspectives*.

Major **differences** observed were that (a) The *credit hours or units* required for each area vary significantly between institutions. (b) *Some universities have unique categories* such as "Big Questions," "Scholarship in Practice," or thematic areas like "Sustainability" or "Health and Well-Being," (c) The *structure of the requirements* differs; some schools have a more flexible approach with overlapping credits (e.g., University of California, Davis), while others have strict course lists (e.g., Purdue). (d) *Specificity varies*; some schools list exact courses (e.g., Georgia Institute of Technology), while others describe broader areas without specifying courses (e.g., University of Wisconsin- Madison).

Evidence for a Dual Core Curriculum Model
We found no specific reference to something that resembles "dual core" in the way that it has been described publicly ("where humanities majors complete a STEM-focused core, and our STEM majors complete a humanities-focused core. We've also talked about first principles questions about the purpose of a core as a shared experience instead of a big and impersonal menu for students"). There was evidence, however, that the specific nature of the core curriculum (specific courses selected, number of units required) might vary by major/college in many institutions. This approach often had a small number of truly universal course requirements, followed by variable numbers of required courses in different categories according to minor (e.g., Chemistry/Physics/Mathematics might have more quantitative or science requirements, and might be able to count more of their major-required courses as part of the gen ed portfolio).

Special Features of Peer Institution Core Curriculum Models

In no particular order, below are some noteworthy features of peer institution core curriculum models.

1. The Universities in California most resembled UF in that they had a mix of State requirements, University-wide requirements, and then tailored requirements in categories that varied by college/degree-type;
2. The University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign was particularly intentional in requiring three different classes in culture, including Western cultures, non-Western cultures, and US minority cultures. This seemed to ensure great breadth of cultural sensitivity;
3. Several institutions (Cornell, University of Virginia, University of Michigan) allowed individual colleges to establish their own core requirements and had relatively few university-wide requirements;
4. Some peer institutions (University of California, San Diego; University of California, Davis) allow students the option to meet some of their requirements through advanced placement (AP), international baccalaureate (IB) or through test scores (ACT or SAT);
5. The recent revision of general education requirements at Ohio State University led to a reduction in the amount of core courses and credits;
6. At institutions self-identified as focusing on engineering (Purdue University, Georgia Tech), humanities courses seemed to be the focus of core requirements for the sake of curricular breadth.

3. The Current University of Florida Core Experience – Data-driven Metrics

How Much of the UF Core do Students Complete at UF?

Exemptions: Students who earn an Articulated AA or have a General Education Requirements Met (GERM) Statement from a Florida Public Post-Secondary Institution are exempt from any UF Core Requirements. This includes both students admitted as freshmen and students who transfer to UF. In addition, students who are part of the Innovation Academy are exempt from the Quest requirements of the UF Core.

Incoming credit and UF core completion: In examining how students complete the UF Core, we examined what the typical experience is like for UF Students admitted to our residential program as Freshmen (not UF Online, not PaCE, and not Innovation Academy (IA)). Incoming credit from exams (AP, IB, AICE) and dual enrollment courses can count toward UF Core requirements, so many students enter UF with a significant amount of their requirements already satisfied. The analysis below is based upon transactional data pulled from the Student Information System and degree audit for Summer 2023 and Fall 2023 freshman admits. As a note, Quest courses must be taken at UF.

The population consists of 6772 First Time in College (FTIC) students who are not PaCE, IA, or UFO students and who have degree audits (excluding those that were dismissed, discontinued, or graduated in one year).

On average, this cohort of students brought in 33.74 transfer and test credits taken prior to admission (averaging 14.26 Transfer Credits and 34.62 Test credits)

Six hundred and sixty (9.7%) of these students have an Articulated AA or General Education Requirements Met (GERM) Statement from a Florida Public Post-Secondary Institution. By state regulation, these students are not required to meet any UF General Education Requirements, including UF Quest requirements.

Table 1. 2023 Summer and Fall FTIC students satisfying 6 credits of UF Core on **entry** (note: some majors require more than 6 credits in a given subject area)

UF State Core and General Education Requirements			
Requirement	Subject Area	Percentage Students Satisfying State Core Requirement[1][2]	UF General Education Requirement
Core	Biological & Physical Sciences (B or P)	66.23% (4048/6112)	28.27% (1728/6112)
Core	Composition (C)	83.39% (5097/6112)	72.74% (4446/6112)
Core	Humanities (H)[3]	29.25% (1788/6112)	38.79% (2371/6112)
Core	Social & Behavioral Sciences (S)	78.19% (4779/6112)	55.69% (4779/6112)
Core	Mathematics (M)	62.19% (3801/6112)	26.72% (1633/6112)
Additional[4]	International (N)	--	63.37% (3873/6112)
Additional[5]	Diversity (D)	--	49.03% (2997/6112)
Quest 1[6]	--	--	--
Quest 2[7]	--	--	--
Additional Requirements			
Requirement			Percentage of Students Satisfying Requirement[8]
Civic Literacy Course Requirement			69.92% (4735/6772)
Writing Requirement 6K words			11.41% (699/6125)
Writing Requirement 12K words			21.57% (1321/6125)
Writing Requirement 18K words			22.42% (1373/6125)
Writing Requirement 24K words			33.94% (2079/6125)

---

[1] State Core and General Subject Areas for General Education are evaluated independently. By default, the degree audit uses earliest taken credits first in each area of the degree program.

[2] Calculated against the number of Summer and Fall 2023 FTIC admits with degree audits that did not have an Articulated AA or a GERM statement (6112).

[3] A noted discrepancy exists between the of test/transfer courses that count towards General Humanities and those that count in State Core. This is possibly the result of a discrepancy between the number of General Humanities offered through AP, UIB, and AICE versus the number that would count for State Core Humanities.

[4] This is not a standalone requirement, and is attached to a Humanities, Social Science, or Natural Science Course required in the 36 credit General Education Requirement

[5] This is not a standalone requirement, and is attached to a Humanities, Social Science, or Natural Science Course required in the 36 credit General Education Requirement

[6] This is not a standalone requirement. One of the Humanities courses an FTIC student must take is Quest 1, unless the student has the GERM statement or an Articulated AA.

[7] This is not a standalone requirement. One of the Social and Behavioral Science or Natural Science courses an FTIC student must take is Quest 2, unless the student has the GERM statement or an Articulated AA.

[8] Calculated against the number of Summer and Fall 2023 FTIC admits with degree audits that did not have an Articulated AA (6125). Students with GERM statement have to complete UF Writing Requirement, but Articulated AAs do not.

Conclusions   Students are completing much of the UF Core prior to enrollment at UF. The only part of the core that these students *must* complete at UF is the Quest 1 – Quest 2 sequence. Students who transfer in with an AA or begin as freshmen with the AA are exempt from Quest because it is a university general education requirement. Students in Innovation Academy are also exempt from Quest.

Next steps   Consider modifying general education in the context that many students do not complete their current general education requirements at UF. Consider separating state regulated general education requirements from UF Quest or courses we would like students to take as a part of their UF Core education.

Patterns of UF Core course enrollment: To examine courses students are taking in the UF Core, we examined course enrollments in the top 20 UF Core courses for Fall 2023 among degree seeking undergraduate students. We excluded lab enrollments because they are typically taken in conjunction with a course and IDS2935 because Quest is most often offered under this course number. The class reported below (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior) is by credit earned as of Fall 2023.

Importantly, enrollment in these courses does not mean that the course is *necessary* for students' UF Core Requirements. For example, a student may need STA 2023 Statistics and MAC2311, Calculus 1 for their major. If they place into MAC1147, Precalculus Algebra and Trigonometry, the student would take three math courses (MAC1147, MAC2311, and STA2023). So, even though these three courses are UF Core Courses, only two would count for the UF Core.

Table 2.   Course Enrollments in the Top 20 UF Core Courses, Fall 2023

General Education Requirement	State Core (yes or no)	Course Number/ Title	Freshman Count	Sophomore Count	Junior Count	Senior Count	Total
M	Yes	STA2023	337	966	513	120	1936
M	Yes	MAC2311	394	868	216	42	1520
P	Yes	CHM2045	144	770	322	94	1330
S	No	MAN3025	6	214	699	403	1322
S	No	ECO2023	343	603	250	103	1299
S	No	MAR3023	1	252	707	319	1279
M	No	MAC2313	35	550	523	117	1225
P	No	CHM1025	293	672	149	19	1133
M	Yes	MAC2312	121	644	223	57	1045
S	Yes	ECO2013	267	460	221	90	1038
B	Yes	BSC2010	112	411	376	109	1008
B	No	BSC2011	13	195	629	163	1000

H	Yes	ARH2000	217	493	163	87	960
P	Yes	CHM2046	13	224	531	148	916
C	No	ENC3246	7	114	489	275	885
S	Yes	PSY2012	259	358	165	79	861
S	Yes*	SYG2000	110	276	256	164	806
B	No	APK2100C	7	101	281	395	784
P	Yes	PHY2053	13	54	164	532	763
S	Yes	AMH2020	123	214	2000	161	698

SYG2000 was classified as a state core course in Fall 2023; it is no longer a state core course.

Conclusions   Highly enrolled UF Core Courses may serve several purposes (e.g., UF Core requirements, majors requirements, college requirements). Many of these courses are required for various majors and/or pre-health courses and are unlikely to be taken for sole purposes of satisfying the UF Core (e.g., MAC2313).

Next Steps   Go beyond enrollment in core courses and identify which courses are being applied toward core requirements. Determine how many core courses students typically take beyond those to satisfy the UF Core requirements (i.e., What proportion of a typical student degree is comprised of courses listed as part of the UF Core?)

Overlap between UF core courses and major or college requirements: Students may also choose to take UF Core courses that overlap with their college and major requirements. Functionally, most majors have some overlap with possible UF Core courses as foundational courses for the major. To examine this, we used information given to first year students in preview by the colleges and schools that explicate which general education course requirements will be met in the coursework for the majors in their college.

Generally, students take courses in the general education courses that provide the foundation for their upper division level coursework. For example, engineering majors generally will complete general education biological and physical sciences, mathematics requirements, 3 credits of the composition requirements. Students in the College of Business will meet mathematics and social sciences requirements. Digital arts and sciences majors will meet humanities and mathematics requirements. Essentially, the content met by the courses in a student's major and college requirements reflects the skills and knowledge required to build a successful foundation for their more advanced major coursework.

Table 3. UF subject area requirements met or partially met through major or college requirements

College/School: _Major(s)_	B/P	C	H	M	S	N	D
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences*							
Family, Youth, and Community Sciences	X			X	X		
Marine Sciences	X			X			
Geomatics: Geospatial Analysis	X			X	X		
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences							
Biological, Mathematical, and Physical Science Majors	X			X			
Sustainability Studies	X		X		X		
Social Science Majors	X***			X	X	X***	X***
College of Design Construction and Planning							
Landscape Architecture	X	X	X	X			
College of Engineering							
All	X	X		X			
College of Nursing							
Nursing	X				X		
Fisher School of Accounting							
Accounting				X	X		
College of the Arts							
Art and Art History			X				
Digital Arts and Sciences			X	X			
Music			X				
Theatre and Dance			X				
College of Business							
All				X	X		
College of Journalism and Communications							
All				X	X		
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences							
Foreign Language Majors			X			X	
Humanities Majors			X	X**	X**	X	X
International Studies			X		X	X	
Women's Studies				X	X	X	X

College of Design Construction and Planning								
Architecture				X	X		X	
Interior Design			X	X	X		X	
Sustainability and the Built Environment			X	X	X	X		
College of Education								
All						X		X

* First year advising resource stated "Most CALS majors include a number of Gen Ed requirements". We included a couple of examples from this college.

** First year advising resource stated that "depending on course selection, African American Studies majors may be some math and social science requirements.

*** Depending on major

Conclusions Students satisfy many UF Core Courses in their major consistent with the general education categories of their major. The UF Core requires students to take courses both in their major and in general education areas outside of their major.

Next steps Consider how to weave skills and knowledge that align with the goals of the UF core across core courses to facilitate transfer from areas outside of their major toward their career and major goals.

Student experiences in UF Core Courses: To assess students' experiences in the highest enrolled UF Core Courses, we examined teaching evaluations across the 20 courses reported above for the Fall 2023 semester. We report the average of the 9 initial evaluation items (e.g., the instructor was enthusiastic about the course; the instructor provided prompt and meaningful feedback on my work and performance in the course; course activities and assignments improved my ability to analyze, solve problems, and/or think critically) and the students' overall assessment of the course in their response to the item 'overall, this course was a valuable educational experience. Students scored each item on a scale of 1-5 with 1 indicating strongly disagree, 2 indicating disagree, 3 indicating neutral, 4 indicating agree, and 5 indicating strongly agree.

Table 4. Teaching Evaluation Results for the Top 20 UF Core Courses, Fall 2023

General Education Requirement	State Core (yes or no)	Course Number/Title	Average Rating (items 1-9)	Overall, this course was a valuable educational experience
M	Yes	STA2023	4.14	4.13
M	Yes	MAC2311	4.38	4.31
P	Yes	CHM2045	4.00	4.03
S	No	MAN3025	3.54	3.63

S	No	ECO2023	4.28	4.22
S	No	MAR3023	4.16	4.08
M	No	MAC2313	3.87	4.08
P	No	CHM1025	3.19	3.66
M	Yes	MAC2312	4.32	4.33
S	Yes	ECO2013	4.45	4.35
B	Yes	BSC2010	3.94	3.93
B	No	BSC2011	4.26	4.11
H	Yes	ARH2000	3.89	3.80
P	Yes	CHM2046	3.83	3.73
C	No	ENC3246	4.25	4.00
S	Yes	PSY2012	4.00	4.08
S	Yes*	SYG2000	4.15	4.09
B	No	APK2100C	4.41	4.42
P	Yes	PHY2053	4.33	4.14
S	Yes	AMH2020	4.38	4.21

*SYG2000 was classified as a state core course in Fall 2023; it is no longer a state core course.

Conclusions   Overall, evaluations in these courses are above the midpoint of the scale, indicating that on average, students have positive experiences in high enrollment UF Core Courses.

Next steps   Consider adding questions to student course evaluations for UF core courses that are designed to assess how well the course achieves overarching goals of the UF Core. Future evaluations of the UF Core could consider assessing other characteristics of these courses such as the average class sizes and instructor characteristics.

Experiential learning: At UF, students have an opportunity to engage in experiential learning as part of their UF education. In experiential learning participation, students engage in direct, hands-on engagement with the world rather than learning in a traditional classroom setting. These experiences could consist of internships or co-ops, study abroad, community or public service projects, research, or participating in design competitions (see the Center for Teaching Excellence and materials for a workshop on Quest 3). Experiential learning provides valuable opportunities for students to apply academic concepts in the real world and gain practical experience useful for future education or employment. Plans for UF Quest include Quest 3, "Engagement in the World" which is a requirement in which students participate in one of the many options for experiential learning.

Students who graduated in 2022-2023 reported engaging in experiential learning through internships, research experience, and other activities. Sixty-six percent of students reported being employed while attending UF.

Table 5. Percent of UF Undergraduates who Participated in Specific Experiential Learning Components, Class of 2022-2023.

Experiential Learning Component	Percentage of Students Reporting Experience
Completed at least 1 internship	66%
Completed 1 or more academic internship	49%
Completed 1 or more non-academic internship	37%
Completed both an academic and non-academic internship	14%
Research Experience	32%
Campus Involvement	73%
Service (volunteering, community service, and service learning)	56%
Mentorship	24%
Job Shadows	15%
Gig work	10%
Fellowships	3%
Apprenticeships	1%

Source: https://career.ufl.edu/2022-2023-student-outcomes/

Conclusions   Many UF Students take part in experiential learning, but the experience is far from universal.

Next steps   Implement Quest 3 to further students' involvement with experiential learning; work with university partners to expand opportunities for experiential learning for all students.

Data on changing majors: To examine how often students change majors, we obtained data from 5 cohorts of students who started in 2019-2023 (thank you to Nigel Richardson and Lynn O'Sickey). Below, the tables show overall numbers of students in each cohort and the number of students who changed majors and colleges broken out by year of change and summarized overall.

Table 6. Cohort sample sizes (n)

Cohort	Total number of students
2019	6621
2020	6352
2021	6839
2022	6632
2023	6803

Table 7. Major Changes by Cohort & Year

Cohort	2019-2020		2020-2021		2021-2022		2022-2023		2023-2024	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
2019	2635	39.8%	1845	27.9%	619	9.3%	111	1.7%	18	0.3%
2020			2315	36.4%	1845	29.0%	547	8.6%	101	1.6%
2021					2739	40.0%	1779	26.0%	543	7.9%
2022							2368	35.7%	1443	21.8%
2023									1928	28.3%

Table 8. College Changes by Cohort & Year

Cohort	2019-2020		2020-2021		2021-2022		2022-2023		2023-2024	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
2019	1465	22.13%	1078	16.28%	255	3.85%	39	0.59%	5	0.08%
2020			1323	20.83%	1065	16.77%	247	3.89%	32	0.50%
2021					1547	22.62%	1054	15.41%	199	2.91%
2022							1429	21.55%	776	11.70%
2023									1077	15.83%

Table 9. Percent of Students who Changed Major by Cohort

Cohort	n	% Changed Major
2019	3850	58.1%
2020	3591	56.5%
2021	3820	55.9%
2022	3125	47.1%
2023	1899	27.9%

Table 10. Percent of Students who Changed College by Cohort

Cohort	n	% Changed College
2019	2842	42.9%
2020	2667	42.0%

2021	2800	40.9%
2022	2205	33.2%
2023	1077	15.8%

Conclusions   Major switching is very common, with 56.83% of students enrolled for 3-5 years switching majors. It is also common to switch colleges, with 41.93% of students enrolled for 3-5 years switching colleges.

Next Steps   Explore the impact of UF Core on major switching. Do students switch majors because of courses they have taken in the UF Core? Or what courses are driving most major switching?

4. The Current University of Florida Core Experience – UF Community Insights

The following section summarizes the insights provided by UF communities with a vested interest in the UF Core Curriculum. Specifically, members of the taskforce engaged in dialogues with the UF General Education Committee, UF Quest Committee, the UF Curriculum Committee, the UF Academic Assessment Committee, the UF Advisory Council for Undergraduate Affairs, the UF Undergraduate Advising Council, Career Connections in the Division of Student Life, the UF ROTC leadership, as well as faculty and/or administrators from all 16 Colleges within the University of Florida. Below is a summary of the primary themes that emerged from these dialogues summarized under 4 overarching questions.

4.1 What is the Purpose of the Current UF Core?

One theme that emerged early on in interactions between this taskforce and UF communities was that the term "UF Core Curriculum" lacked a universally understood definition. In order to ensure a shared understanding of the UF Core Curriculum for the purposes of engaged discussion, our taskforce offered the following definition "The UF Core consists of the course requirements all UF students must satisfy before graduation, regardless of major. Currently, these are the state general education requirements and the UF general education requirements, including Quest." The following summarizes goals and purposes of the UF Core Curriculum inferred from discussions and statements across various academic and administrative bodies.

The overall perceived goals of the current UF Core Curriculum include:

4.1.1 *Facilitate Informed Discovery*: Help students discover and envision their educational and career trajectories, goals, and objectives. This enables students to make informed decisions about majors, minors, electives, and cross-disciplinary education.

4.1.2 *Provide Breadth of Knowledge*: Across various colleges, there is a consensus on the importance of exposing students to a broad base of knowledge and methods beyond their major, ensuring they are well-rounded individuals. Students receive an education that prepares them for the world by exposing them to a wide range of disciplines beyond their undergraduate major and high school curriculum.

4.1.3 *Develop Transferrable Skills*: Equip students with knowledge and skills that are applicable across various career paths, including critical thinking, communication, and collaboration.

4.1.4 *Offer a Shared Experience*: Provide an educational shared experience that is unique to the University of Florida, fostering a sense of community and shared learning.

4.1.5 *Prepare Global Citizens*: Educate students to succeed as ethical thinkers and global citizens, ready to engage with contemporary and future global challenges.

4.2 Core curriculum goals of specific UF communities:

In no particular order, below are some noteworthy goals mentioned by specific units within UF regarding the Core Curriculum.

4.2.1 **College of Nursing**: Emphasis on communication, both written and oral. Develop communication skills and diplomacy when working with or serving clinical populations who hold diverse perspectives.

4.2.2 **General Education Committee**: Emphasis on a well-rounded education, exploration outside of major foci, communication and collaborative skills enhancement, and campus familiarization.

4.2.3 **UF Quest Committee**: Emphasis on preparing well-rounded and engaged citizens, teaching students how to think critically through engagement with faculty on enduring questions.

The UF Core Curriculum aims to provide a comprehensive, interdisciplinary educational experience that prepares students for both their professional careers and roles as informed, ethical citizens.

4.3 What Aspects of the Current UF Core are Functioning Well?

The UF Core is praised for its multifaceted and interdisciplinary approach, allowing students to explore various disciplines without compromising their major or minor requirements. Through its multifaceted approach, the experiences for students highlight the core's role in aiding informed educational and career decisions, fostering multicultural literacy, and bridging academic learning with real-world application. The following summary following highlights key responses from the UF Core Curriculum Taskforce regarding the impact and effectiveness of the current UF Core.

The Advisory Council for Undergraduate Affairs appreciates the core's dual nature, which allows students to explore disciplines outside their major without compromising their major or minor requirements. This exposure is enhanced by Quest courses, which are designed for skill acquisition in a multi-disciplinary setting.

The Department of Classics and the Department of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies both highlight the core's effectiveness in aiding students' informed decisions regarding their educational and career paths, facilitated by the opportunity to engage in cross-disciplinary education. The Department of Spanish and Portuguese Studies advocates for the inclusion of multicultural literacy in the core curriculum, emphasizing its relevance in equipping students with 21st-century skills.

The UF Experiential Learning Academic Requirement (ELAR) is recognized for its potential to bridge the gap between academic learning and real-world application, thus fostering personal and professional growth. This initiative is seen as a step towards preparing students more effectively for the workforce and enhancing UF's reputation both nationally and internationally.

Colleges of Nursing, Pharmacy, and IFAS stress the importance of foundational skills such as communication, professionalism, and a commitment to lifelong learning across disciplines.

The Division of Student Life points out the core's flexibility and variety, which encourages students to explore their interests through general education classes, potentially leading to changes in major or the pursuit of additional qualifications.

The General Education Committee and the Quest Subcommittee emphasize the core's role in providing a well-rounded education, promoting interdisciplinary communication and collaboration, and enabling students to explore different trajectories. Quest courses are lauded for their innovative teaching techniques, small class sizes, and experiential learning.

In summary, the UF Core is functioning well in facilitating cross-disciplinary education and informed decision-making, incorporating essential 21st-century skills through initiatives like ELAR, offering flexibility and breadth in course selection, and promoting a well-rounded education through innovative programs like Quest. These aspects collectively enhance the educational experience at UF, preparing students for successful careers and personal growth.

4.4 What Aspects of the Current UF Core Should be Improved?

The UF community offers several suggestions for areas to improve and innovate the core curriculum. The community acknowledges **the current UF Core is not a common shared experience** as students can enter UF having fulfilled core requirements either in high school or while enrolled at other Florida state colleges; because of this reality, the community encourages any shifts made to the core curriculum to ensure a common experience remain (currently Quest) for incoming students while simultaneously addressing the 43% loss rate of transfer credit. Stakeholders across multiple areas expressed concern in assessment of current core courses and the lack of clarification as to whether courses continue to meet their stated objectives, whether courses are intended to be skills-based or content-based and how those goals might be understood by a student, and a lack of resources necessary to deliver the current core or any future innovation. Future-forward changes the community is most interested in focusing on include aligning curriculum with outcomes, experiential learning and access to and inclusion of study abroad in UF core requirements.

Current assessment procedures: Overall, there is an opportunity to improve our assessment of the UF Core Curriculum to ensure it is achieving the intended goals and purposes. Consistent, reliable, and valid methods of assessing the Core are necessary to provide information about what is working, what could be improved or adapted, and what needs to be added or removed. Below are specific comments related to this theme.
- 4.4.1 The Advisory Council for Undergraduate Affairs expressed an interest in consistent, reliable, and valid assessment of general education courses fulfilling their stated objectives. Understanding where we are meeting expectations and where there is room for improvement will help direct efforts to enhance general education.
- 4.4.2 The Academic Assessment Committee shared concerns around the ability to accurately assess the courses currently offered in the core. The committee recommended working with faculty to enhance understanding, engagement, and consistent application of the assessment process across programs.

Clarification of purpose:

4.4.3   College Councils and the Advisory Council for Undergraduate Affairs described the current UF core as a "scattered approach" that lacks identity. The purpose of the UF core needs to be clarified so that that identity can be found and then the current core properly assessed.

4.4.4   College Councils further express confusion as to skill "vs" content-based purpose of the core, as described. Currently, General Education is broadly content driven, the core notion seems to have been initially conceived with a content / subject area focus but could also emphasize skill development and application of knowledge. For example, a content-focused psychology class taken by an engineering student may leave the student to connect the dots between that content and the application in a future career.

4.4.5   College Councils also expressed concern over a lack of a streamlined approach to the core that results in confusion and potentially competing curricular goals.

4.4.6   The Academic Assessment Committee suggests a stronger emphasis on foundational elements in UF Quest to better align with expected outcomes and skills.

4.4.7   The General Education Committee suggests solidifying requirements like QUEST to ensure they address the identified needs.

Resources:

4.4.8   The Advisory Council for Undergraduate Affairs and Division of Student Life state that the current core offerings are limited, complicating class selection, enrollment, and matriculation. They suggest addressing the demand and availability of core courses by allowing all colleges to develop and offer UF Core courses.

4.4.9   The University Curriculum Committee stated a need for increased resources to effectively offer core requirements.

4.4.10 The General Education Committee calls for additional human resources in College Advising offices to guide students more effectively.

4.4.11 UF Quest states a lack of resources available to meet course demand and quality summer instruction. Lack of faculty funding for summer instruction motivates departments to appoint graduate student instructors and increase enrollment in summer Quest courses.

4.4.12 UF Quest acknowledges the burden of running the General Education program falls to an associate provost, UF General Education Committee, and a few colleges thus never providing a sustainable, cohesive model for delivering innovative, relevant general education because of the temporary committee memberships and a competitive budget model. They suggest addressing this by appointing faculty directors of both UF General Education and UF Quest, considering a distinguished faculty fellows model funded through endowments, addressing assessments and communicating the "why" of these programs more effectively.

Experiential learning:

    4.4.13 Experiential Learning Academic Requirement Director emphasized the potential of experiential learning to prepare students for real-world experiences and professional development. He notes UF's lag in implementing such requirements compared to peer institutions and the significant return on investment and reputation enhancement it could bring. Work in this area has already begun with investment from stakeholders across UF.

    4.4.14 The General Education Committee suggests integrating internships and research opportunities into courses to fulfill experiential learning and connect students to post-graduate applications of classroom content. Formalizing off-campus connections will be a key to the success of already in-process experiential learning programs.

    4.4.15 The University Curriculum Committee suggests Experiential Learning should fall in alignment with the goals students begin to address in Quest 1 & 2.

    4.4.16 The College of the Arts offers extensive experiential learning opportunities that lead to successful, demonstrable outcomes for graduates. Faculty state that connecting classroom content and skills to practical application does effectively prepare students for success in chosen fields. To offer robust experiential learning, faculty suggest an assessment of faculty resources available given the research demands tenure-track faculty are expected and desire to meet.

Study abroad:

    4.4.17 The General Education Committee suggests systematizing study abroad with on-campus virtual options for accessibility in addition to programs in existence.

    4.4.18 College Councils suggests study abroad as a way to prepare students for global citizenship; the reality today and a way to counter-balance the new, limited state core objectives.

    4.4.19 College Councils suggest Study Abroad fall under a requirement for multi-cultural literacy which offers a pragmatic approach to cultural experience. With a lack of a consistent language requirement across UF, multicultural literacy could be met through study abroad or language proficiency.

In summary, the UF community feels a focus on assessing the current UF core for relevancy and addressing resource issues in tandem with expanding requirements and opportunities for experiential learning and study abroad opportunities is needed in innovating the UF core for future student success. The committee poses the following questions as potential next steps in investigating innovative directions and problem-solving:

    4.4.20 Are there transdisciplinary approaches to General Education that need to be considered and could sustainably innovate the curriculum to address content/skills application concerns across disciplines?

    4.4.21 What resources and assessments need to be adjusted to sustainably address content of core curriculum courses across time? How do these adjusted allocations continue to drive the relevancy of core curriculum in future decades?

    4.4.22 What is the experience of the employer of the UF grad?

4.4.23 Are there marketing and communication models for large institutions UF could replicate to better address the inclusion of all stakeholders into conversation and promote a more complete understanding of the UF core and institution as a whole?

4.5 What Measurable Skills Should all Graduating UF Students have Acquired, Regardless of Major?

UF should be committed to ensuring that all graduating students, regardless of their major, acquire and develop essential knowledge and skills for their professional and personal growth. This includes not only practical abilities like communication and collaboration but also intellectual skills such as critical thinking. Knowledge as a learning outcome is integrated into this framework, as it becomes a measurable skill through its application, including in real-world scenarios. The skills should be derived from the collective input of departments and committees across the university, reflecting a holistic approach to education that encompasses the Florida General Education requirements, the UF General Education requirement, and the Quest requirement, and that also extends to practical, real-world applications.
Multiple institutional committees, councils, and departments identified key skills that should be acquired by all graduating students. Analytical and critical thinking were commonly identified as foundational for understanding complex problems and making informed decisions. Professional skills such as integrity, ethics, innovative thinking, and problem-solving skills were identified as critical for navigating today's globalized and rapidly changing professional landscape (Advisory Council for Undergraduate Affairs, IFAS, and the College of Pharmacy). Communication skills, both written and oral, were identified as important for expressing ideas clearly and effectively, and this can be further refined to include the ability to engage diplomatically with differing viewpoints (College of Nursing). Multicultural literacy was also highlighted (Dept of Spanish and Portuguese Studies)

UF students should acquire creative, critical, and analytical thinking skills, digital literacy, and the ability to work effectively in teams, synthesizing information from diverse courses to draw connections and develop a comprehensive understanding of one's field of study (The General Education Committee and the UF Quest Subcommittee). A frequent theme in meetings with UF committees was the potential for experiential learning to be a cornerstone of a UF educational experience, with the goal of engaging students with real-world activities to foster personal and professional development and civic literacy. However, helping student acquire these skills and measuring their competency in them will create challenges, including faculty understanding and compliance with assessment processes, consistency across programs, and effective communication (Academic Assessment Committee).