Proposed Model for the Structure and Delivery of the Core of Common Studies

**Structure**
The proposed model is envisioned as a series of concentric circles with Catholic, Jesuit, and Ignatian principles at their core. Surrounding circles represent fundamental values and purposes of (Christian) humanism to be taught in all colleges and programs. Each circle can be bisected by wedges representing given skills and competencies. The core would be integrated to encompass interdisciplinary courses fulfilling more than one skill or competency. Both the revision of current courses and the development of new courses will support the Core.

**Delivery**
The core curriculum would be delivered through a series of courses or through a combination of sequential and asynchronous courses addressing its learning outcomes.

Core education would begin with a first-year experience course highlighting common curricular themes and desired learning outcomes and integrate students and faculty representing multiple colleges and disciplines. Students would learn the basics of academic life and explore actively the core learning outcomes using readings, discussions, field trips, service opportunities, etc. A possible model is Marquette’s underutilized Introduction to Inquiry method where students learn how to articulate their own points of view and to share them with one another.

Other courses would not only provide the theoretical tools needed to pursue higher-level learning but also employ AAC&U high-impact methods and practices such as service learning, internships, study abroad, capstone courses, undergraduate research, etc. These learning ventures would provide solid academic value, whether inside or outside the classroom.

**Credits, Courses, and Competencies**
The core should contain 34 credits, allowing for a first-year experience course worth 2 credits.

Circle 1: *The model’s inner circle, its core, reflects the values of a Jesuit, Catholic education.* Students will begin to focus on those values in their first-year experience courses offering students exposure to diverse disciplinary perspectives in small learning sections mentored by faculty from various colleges. Those values should be reinforced in other core courses and throughout the various curricula.

Circle 2: *Skills or competencies of communication.* Students would attain foundations in grammar, writing, rhetoric, literature, information literacy, and foreign languages. Note that these skills are traditionally taught at the lower level to enable higher-level thinking and applications.

Circle 3: *Intellectual pursuits through philosophical and theological study.* Students would study ethics and ethical behaviors, logic, debate, argument, and critical thinking. They would learn about the worldview of others and reshape their own worldviews based on the long intellectual and religious traditions of human beings grappling with its most difficult challenges. The content
needs to enable students to develop personal ethical standards and behaviors that will enable them to be people for and with others.

Circle 4: *Historical and social scientific knowledge.* Students need to learn from their own contexts and experiences as well as those of others. Socio-historical constructs necessarily cross disciplines.

Circle 5: *Mathematical and scientific knowledge, skills, and competencies.* Students would acquire the tools needed to function as thinking adults and professionals in a highly complex world, developing a deeper understanding of the created universe.

**Sequences**
The circles present a potential sequence and structure. Many learning experiences (e.g. service learning, study-abroad, internships, living learning communities, etc.) will span multiple circles. For example, mathematics courses would offer students analytical skills applicable to the study of history, sociology, health sciences, and engineering.

**Topics and Themes**
The proposed model encourages interdisciplinary and team-taught courses, although a given course might address a single theme pertinent to the content of the core. It is essential that students experience these fundamental core values as a university community where dialogue across disciplines will enable them to see the broadest strokes.
Learning Outcomes
The following outcomes are derived from Themes of Jesuit Higher Education by Peter Hans Kolvenbach, S.J.

Character formation (pietas): Developing individuals of good moral character and ethical standards with the ability for discernment and action for the common good.

Faith: Creating educational experiences to support students in developing and practicing their faith traditions.

Human dignity: Valuing all human beings regardless of their backgrounds.

Social justice as laid out in Catholic Social Teaching: To be studied across the curriculum to bring to the fore this distinctive aspect of the Catholic Intellectual Tradition and constitutive element of a Jesuit education.

A global awareness: Focusing on sensitivity and competencies. Students should engage with the world around them and across the globe through knowledge and service.

Imagination: Exploring the sacramentality of the world, recognizing that through creation of the natural world and its wonders and human beings God manifests the divine presence. Experiencing intellectual curiosity, discovery, and imagination to address global problems.

Completing the Core
Students would take courses and engage in related experiences to fulfill core outcomes. Independent study, alternative breaks, and other such learning ventures outside the classroom learning would augment the academic element of the core curriculum.

Integration
The University, colleges, and departments need to support ongoing faculty dialogue about the nature of the Core, how the Core is being incorporated into the classroom (both in required courses and in later courses not specifically aligned with the Core), and design and support interdisciplinary courses.

Jesuit Mission
The learning outcomes above originate in documents on Jesuit higher education and include reference to social justice, which is named as a constitutive element of a Jesuit education.
**Campus Learning Outcomes**
This proposal addresses many of the learning outcomes prioritized by members of the campus community as listed in the appendix.

**Current and Future Needs of the Colleges**
The proposed model accommodates required professional education standards and prepares the students to operate in a real world not marked by disciplinary silos.

**Acceptance across the Colleges**
Integrated learning is essential for today’s professional and workforce development. Faculty members often speak of their desires for improved integration across disciplines. Creating a core curriculum that values and awards integration will result in a win-win situation for students and faculty alike. Faculty development and creative administration of such a core will be vital to its success. Many faculty members already cross disciplinary lines in their own courses. Tapping into the expertise of those with the skill and ambition to lead the required curriculum change will be crucial, as will harnessing those faculty members who already engage in teaching and practice according to the values of Ignatian pedagogy.
Appendix

This represents a short list of learning outcomes identified through the last Core Revision survey that is directly applicable to the emphases detailed in this proposal.

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<td>Communicate effectively in writing, speaking and artistic expression.</td>
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<td>Develop creative, problem-solving strategies and critical thinking skills in the context of complex global issues.</td>
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<td>Make appropriate professional and personal judgments rooted in a clearly articulated ethical or moral foundation.</td>
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<td>Purposefully connect and integrate knowledge and skills from across disciplines to solve problems in socially responsible ways.</td>
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<td>Identify the underlying assumptions in one's own arguments and the arguments of others.</td>
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<td>Demonstrate an understanding of broader cultural, historical, theological, or conceptual contexts of particular issues, ideas, objects, or events past and present.</td>
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<td>Engage in evidence-based research by asking interesting and important questions, collecting and analyzing appropriate data, and considering the implications and limitations of the findings.</td>
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<td>Ask questions rooted in curiosity and identify answers based on systematic process of discovery.</td>
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<td>Employ mathematical and statistical methods to analyze and develop solutions for problems arising from real-world situations.</td>
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<td>Use quantitative and qualitative evidence in the evaluation, construction, and communication of arguments in public, professional, and personal life.</td>
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<td>Engage in an examination of personal values and experiences in light of the Catholic, Jesuit traditions and integrate these understandings with the principles that guide their lives.</td>
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