Executive Summary

The Core Curriculum is the explicit mechanism for the academic delivery of the Mission of the University. While the myriad values embedded within the University Mission (“the search for truth, the discovery and sharing of knowledge, the fostering of personal and professional excellence, the promotion of a life of faith, and the development of leadership expressed in service to others”) may be given life in individual courses, this proposed framework is a series of student-centered seminars and experiences that will ensure this essential promise is upheld. Grounded in the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm and modeled in part on the *Eloquentia Perfecta* seminars which are part of the Fordham University Core Curriculum, the Marquette Core Seminars are one-credit seminars that students take during their first, second and third years initially to assist in their transition to college and ultimately to provide a delivery mechanism for the values-based, interpersonal components of the mission.

Introduction

Academic coursework is at the heart of most Jesuit core curricula. They often focus on learning outcomes and pedagogy. However, there are important components of learning implicit in the Ignatian paradigm, components that are not part of a typical course syllabus. Those components include a developed curiosity for the subject matter, a connection to practical social justice, and strong sense of self to be able to serve in the global context. Many of Marquette’s students do develop these non-cognitive skills through the myriad co-curricular opportunities on campus. Those experiences, however, are often for the self-selected and are not necessarily intentionally sequenced or integrated, that is, they do not maximize the use of experiences for personal growth and learning.

What is needed to make good on Marquette’s promise of developing the whole person is a component of the core that helps each Marquette student with personal growth. One successful way to implement this would be a sequence of one-credit seminars, one in each of the first three years. These seminars would be co-taught by faculty and experts in psycho-social development, experts who are already on campus in co-curricular roles. These seminars would be based on reflections, actions, and experiences. Content of the seminars would be focused on (1) developing a concern for the other, (2) understanding self through reflection and discernment, and (3) acting in ways toward social justice.

Structure

This proposal does not speak to the overall structure of the Core, but instead offers a vehicle that would operate in addition to Core courses, as a mechanism for explicitly delivering Mission-based content and experiences.

Three one-credit classes, each focusing on different psycho-social competencies derived from the University’s Catholic Jesuit mission. The Seminars would be designed in collaboration with the leaders of Core Knowledge Areas and also each college with a current first-year student seminar. Additionally, during the first year, the Seminars will be shaped in partnership with Student Affairs and Mission and Ministry staff and other providers of co-curricular experiences. This
cross-disciplinary and curricular/co-curricular model, especially during the first year, will ensure that the courses are serving multiple University needs: conveying institutional values, providing first year students with resources and staff to assist in their transition, and attending to the specific concerns unique to the first year (in particular, adjusting to college and beginning to consider the assets and challenges of Milwaukee’s urban setting).

**Sequences**

The first year seminar will focus on transition to college and Marquette and Milwaukee in particular. The second year seminar will focus on understanding of sense of self in a global community. In the third year as the student begins to engage more deeply in major course-work, the seminar shifts to explicitly address the question of integrating the Core learning with the student’s major, and begins to focus on the implications in terms of the student’s post-college plans. In each year, consonant with the institutional mission, social justice and the promotion of a life of faith will serve as lenses for course content and delivery. I would add language that explicitly addresses the development of students’ understanding of who they are as leaders called to serve others (particularly the poor and marginalized), using their gifts and talents as well as their education to create positive change in a world that is hungry for beacons of light, hope and constructive contributions (rather than naysayers who merely arm themselves with negative and nasty rhetoric and no action).

**Themes**

One of the key insights of the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm is its reliance on experience, action and reflection. Therefore, each seminar will be designed using this model: service-learning or other service opportunities and other activities will be designed (or incorporated if they are already in existence) to intentionally complement the in-class experiences. These encounters with others, particularly those most in need, will provide significant fodder for reflection and will also provide unique lenses through which to consider the student’s other coursework. See my comment above about leadership and developing students’ deep understanding of their identity and how that identity intersects with others in the world?

**Experience**

Hopefully through these seminars, students would experience the Core as a more coherent, intentional arrangement of courses. The Seminars would allow for a bit of “pulling the curtain back,” to allow the students to see the connection between individual courses and the Core, and the connection between the Core and the University mission.

**Integration**

These seminars exist explicitly to attend to the integration of the Core—to remove the onus from any particular class. By virtue of offering the seminars over a three-year period, the model also recognizes that the goal of integrating the Core will require sustained effort and cannot be accomplished exclusively while the Core is being delivered.
Moreover, this sequence can provide the underpinnings of a Marquette education. It will allow each Marquette student to integrate Ignatian strategies into every class and to place all their and to view all their academic coursework through the context of being persons for others.

**Mission**

As delineated in “Ignatian Pedagogy: A Practical Approach” (1993), “If truly successful, Jesuit education results ultimately in a radical transformation not only of the way in which people habitually think and act, but of the very way in which they live in the world, men and women of competence, conscience and compassion, seeking the greater good in terms of what can be done out of a faith commitment with justice to enhance the quality of peoples’ lives, particularly among God's poor, oppressed and neglected.” These qualities and ways of being do not simply materialize in the lives of young people without intentional focus and development of these characteristics. Students must encounter themselves, their beliefs, and the values of the institution, indeed the Jesuits, in a real way throughout their time as students at Marquette. The proposed series of seminars will allow for the intentional development of these uniquely Ignatian worldviews and capacities.