Results of Focus Group Reports: Themes and Highlights
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Theme 1: The Marquette University Core of Common Studies should be **integrative**, consistent with ideas of Jesuit pedagogy, and **liberal arts-focused**.

- This was one of the primary take-away points of multiple focus groups, including those outside of A&S.
- Keeping "what is unique about a Jesuit education" in mind is important. We need to decide what the purpose of the Core is and redesign courses to achieve the outcomes.
- The components of the Core should be better connected. At present, “coherence between courses is not recognizable to students.”
- How the disciplines relate to each other should be clearer, possibly through emphasizing themes or questions rather than discipline-based knowledge areas.
- The Core could be thematic, focusing on issues like the environment, social justice, or social teaching of the Church.
- Integration could include a better sense of course sequencing, but not all mentioned that specific idea. Indeed, some saw the lack of coordination or sequencing at present as having the benefit of flexibility.
- Hard to articulate the purpose for the current Core. Once a more streamlined core is adopted, faculty and staff must be able to convey what makes it a unique and beneficial part of a Marquette education.

Theme 2: The Marquette University Core of Common Studies should be a **real core**, which is designed to create a **common experience for students**.

- It is important to limit the number of courses in the Core (i.e., to make it a real core), both for coherence and to avoid a core that looks like the gen. ed. requirements at public universities.
- Without a real core, we look increasingly like a professions-focused trade school
- A common core is one of the few potentially unifying activities students experience at Marquette (but in practice the current Core may divide more than unify)
- There is an opportunity to start from scratch rather tinkering with the existing Core
- Some competencies could be left to the individual colleges or majors, but otherwise there should be fewer courses in the Core.

Theme 3: There is a need to maintain or deepen certain **key competencies**.

- Especially in our increasingly globalized and communications-focused society, communication skills and an understanding of diverse cultures are essential.
- There were numerous suggestions on what should be included in the Core, but the most frequent suggestions dealt with the development of student communication skills and cultural competency.
- Strong opposition by some to cutting “diverse cultures” courses from the Core.
- General support for rethinking, “augmenting,” and/or strengthening the writing/rhetoric requirement. At present, students cannot formulate a basic thesis statement.