

Advanced Core Concept Paper--Faculty Spring Retreat

Why develop an upper division integrated course (Advanced Core) for Core/Explore Curriculum?

The purpose of the Advanced Core class is to provide UCCS students with a common educational experience that clarifies learning goals, integrates curricula, spurs personal development and creative thinking and demonstrates the relevance of university education.

1. Clarify Goals—clarifies the learning goals of the Core/Explore curriculum
2. Integrate Curricula—helps students understand how the various elements of the curriculum interconnect and help contribute to their preparation for their careers and life as UCCS students
3. Personal Development and Creative Thinking—embed students personal development and creative thinking within the core academic program
4. Understand Relevance—shows the relevance and value of academic knowledge for real world endeavors by putting knowledge into practice.

Format of Advanced Core Course

The Advanced Core requirement will not be a uniform new course offering that all students have to take. Instead, the “advanced core” will include a set of designated courses with common elements and a common theme but offered by multiple departments and in multiple formats. This requirement would not increase the number of required general education hours.

The intention is to involve the widest range of departments and the professional schools in offering these courses. The advanced core requirement will create a framework for ground-breaking multidisciplinary courses that encourage dialogue across colleges, fields, and departments. Multiple formats might include: interdisciplinary, team-taught, field-based, travel courses, weekend, project-based, etc. Courses that are team taught across colleges would be encouraged. Students would select from courses that are *outside* of their major field of study. Departments and/or colleges would be asked to provide advanced core courses proportional to their number of majors. In some cases, this might be accomplished by modifying existing courses, such as perhaps a section of the humanities course.

Knowledge In Action (KIA) Theme

The unifying theme for the advanced core course will be Knowledge In Action. Faculty from a broad range of disciplines will teach courses centered on how the engagement in real world endeavors are informed by academic knowledge.

Academic fields are associated with a variety of, sometimes unanticipated, action

areas. For instance, biology might inform the creation of an environmental restoration plan, the design of a nutritional program for a professional football team, or a public health marketing campaign. Performing and visual arts disciplines might inform therapeutic programs for people with disabilities, link to computer product or software design, or spawn new ideas for economic development strategies.

Connecting disparate fields such as engineering and social sciences might generate wide-ranging creative ideas about industrial design, community outreach, or urban sustainability. These are just a few off the cuff examples among a multitude of cross-curricular course possibilities.

Knowledge in Action courses will underline the reality that putting ideas into action is increasingly interdisciplinary, requiring broad-based understanding and an even broader ability to work with people from diverse backgrounds. Specific examples will illustrate how knowledge and techniques are drawn from diverse areas of study and how being effective requires mastering, or at least managing, different languages, relationships, and ways of thinking.

The courses will draw particularly from the personal experiences of the KIA faculty as well as other working professionals. The format of the classes will vary, but all will include hands-on, creative, and/or collaborative projects that require students to reflect on and build upon their academic and personal development in the course and in their college career. Often by the time students have settled into a major, they are taking classes with the same set of students. The KIA courses will bring together students from diverse majors and colleges. The courses should be designed so that students from professional schools and the liberal arts college alike are challenged to explore the interplay of interdisciplinary academic knowledge and real world applications. The quality of Knowledge In Action courses will be sustained through coherent curriculum review and teaching support. The Knowledge In Action theme as a signature of the Core /Explore curriculum will be reinforced through:

- KIA faculty seminars to discuss teaching and learning outcomes
- Annual Campus colloquium on Knowledge In Action theme
- Poster session of KIA student projects