

A Time for Change: History of the Creation of the *Carolina Core*

The General Education curriculum provides the common core of knowledge, skill, and academic experience for all Carolina undergraduates. General Education offers students broad exposure to the liberal arts and sciences and secures the foundation for subsequent specialized study.

In 2005 University of South Carolina Provost Mark Becker called for a revision of the General Education curriculum. Professor Frederic Medway led a task force of more than 100 faculty, staff, and students across five campuses addressing the question "What do our students need to know to thrive as well-educated citizens in the twenty-first century?" In December 2007 the task force concluded its work and proposed new learning goals for a revised General Education curriculum.

Building on this initiative President Andrew Sorensen called for formation of the General Education Committee in early 2008 to oversee the General Education program, including but not limited to revision of the curriculum. The Committee included representatives from all colleges with undergraduate programs, as well as from the regional campuses, the Division of Student Affairs, and the Department of Academic Support. The Committee refined the learning outcomes received from the task force and articulated a rationale, values, and guiding principles for the proposed curriculum revision

In January 2009 University Forums were held to receive comment from faculty, staff, and students at USC-Columbia, Lancaster, Salkehatchie, Sumter, and Union, on the proposed rationale and learning objectives for the new curriculum; Comments were also received via the General Education website. The Committee discussed the issues raised in the forums and revised their recommendations. Their final proposal, with the new learning outcomes, was presented to the Faculty Senate and adopted April 2009.

<http://www.sc.edu/provost/forms/proposedcurriculumrevision.pdf>

Over the next year the *Carolina Core* Committee developed contextual statements to provide more information about what *Carolina Core* courses should include in order to meet the new learning outcomes. <http://www.sc.edu/provost/forms/CarolinaCoreAppendix.pdf>

Discussion of the new distribution requirements as well as the process and procedure for new course development continued through 2009 - 2010. Throughout the process University Forums were held every semester to enable the Committee to receive input from the faculty, staff, and students about the new Core. In December 2010 the Faculty Senate approved the new *Carolina Core* distribution requirements. <http://www.sc.edu/provost/forms/CarolinaCoreChart.pdf>

In spring and summer 2011 the *Carolina Core* Committee developed syllabus guidelines for courses in the new Core. Regular University Forums kept faculty, staff, and student participating in the process. In fall 2012 the new *Carolina Core* curriculum was successfully launched. The *Carolina Core* Committee continues to review and approve courses and in fall 2013 began ongoing assessment and continuous improvement of student learning in the *Carolina Core*.