Academic Portfolio Creative Team Report

Mary Baldwin University
Board of Trustees Meeting
July 20-21, 2023

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1. Charge to the Academic Portfolio Creative Team (excerpt)

Grounded by the April 26 resolution, the Academic Portfolio creative team is charged to:

Establish a new academic portfolio that includes innovative components and pedagogies leading to the baccalaureate degree; a compelling liberal arts core, professional certifications, and skill-based outcomes; and a concentrated, focused core of academic majors aligned with evolving market trends to prepare students for the new economy and professional success throughout their career.

Led by the Vice President and Dean of the Gold College of Arts and Sciences, the Academic Portfolio creative team will be governed by the following goal: Design an undergraduate curriculum undergirded by core competencies (e.g., quantitative reasoning, scientific and philosophical inquiry, intercultural literacy, etc.) and buttressed by future-ready skills (e.g., critical thinking, teamwork, research, information arts, creativity, digital and multimedia expression, innovation, etc.). The curriculum will position Mary Baldwin students for professional success while achieving the Board of Trustees mandate that the undergraduate residential segment contribute positively to annual net revenue within the next 3–5 years.

2. Composition of the Academic Portfolio Creative Team (APCT)

Chair: Paul Menzer
Board of Trustees: Tim Powers, Susan Palmer
Staff: Matt Munsey, Phoebe West, Carol Creager, Sheila Tolley, Sarah Cochran, Andrea Scott
Associate Deans: Kerry Cooke, Amy Diduch, Paul Deeble, Cat McPherson, Sue Stevens, Pam Bailey
Faculty:
Murphy Deming College of Health Sciences: Matthew Holman, Kwame Asante Akuamoah-Boateng
Betty Gold College of Arts and Sciences: Sarah Kennedy, Rebecca Haberman, Kerry Mills

Susan Palmer College of Professional Studies: Carla Van Devander

3. Timeline
BOT Charge: May 25, 2023
APCT Formal Composition: June 7, 2023
Meetings: June 9, June 21, June 27
First Deliverable: "The Academic Portfolio team will present for Board consideration at their July meeting a new general education core curriculum consisting of no more than 10 courses with an articulated staffing plan and preliminary instructional cost analysis" (5.25.23 Charge Memo)

4. Executive Summary

Imagine a general education that…

- …was something a student got to do, not had to do.
- …was immediately legible, credible, and relevant to students, parents, and employers.
- …enfranchised human potential and enabled community building.

What would it look like?

The Academic Portfolio Creative Team embraces the generational opportunity to create a new undergraduate academic portfolio for the MBU student, one true both to the liberal arts core and to outcome-oriented results. The Team begins with MBU's "general education core," the hub of a hub-spoke distribution architecture that structures the future undergraduate academic baccalaureate experience at MBU.

The work is guided by three lodestars: create a common curriculum that is **conceptually compelling**, **operationally efficient**, and **experientially engaged**.

- ### Concept
Mary Baldwin's current common curriculum has – from the student's perspective – nothing in common. Other than MBU 101 and ENGL 102 (first-year composition), it is possible today for two MBU students to navigate a four-year baccalaureate program without ever taking two courses in common. This must change. This will change.

To manifest its mission, MBU must create a common curriculum true to its name. The proposed curriculum does just that. Every student – residential, commuter, online – who earns an undergraduate degree from MBU will take ten courses in common. The courses

will present in a deliberate sequence so that students take a certain set of courses in year one, semester one; year one, semester two; year two, semester one; and year two, semester to. For example, year one, semester one might feature "Composition" and "Ethics," and "Data", leading to a set of courses in year two, semester two focused on "Creativity" and "Decisions," etc. Bespoke, post-disciplinary, skill-based, team-taught, deliberately scaffolded, and intricately latticed, MBU's new common curriculum creates an education that students will remember long after they have forgotten what they learned.

- ● Operations

The APCT is working within a strict set of Board-mandated parameters: "30 s.h. of a liberal-arts core, comprised of bespoke courses featuring innovative pedagogy and skill-based outcomes….Total number of courses not to exceed 10" (5.25.23 Charge Memo). These parameters represent a 97% reduction from MBU's current roster of 380 unique courses that carry general education credit.

This reduction will have a concomitant impact on instructional overhead. Based on a first-year enrollment of 300 students and an 85% retention rate, MBU would annually offer 87 sections of these ten unique courses (versus 616 sections in FY 23), requiring at minimum 13 faculty members or FTE.

The mandate to design a common curriculum of ten courses may initially seem to present a limitation. In any creative endeavor, limitations become part of the design, however. The strict delimitation to ten courses requires a thoroughly imbricated suite of post-disciplinary courses. Each course must have its own discrete integrity while contributing to a core of liberal arts courses with a point-of-view and a purpose that students, faculty, parents, and partners can instantly recognize. The common curriculum's value – and values – must be self-evident.

- ● Experience

The delivery of courses in the Key Curriculum must be as innovative as their design. Each team-taught course will offer an unconventional pedagogical experience. Whether that experience be immersive field work, gamification, collaborative problem solving, or Process Oriented Guided Inquiry Learning (POGIL), the "content delivery" should put pressure on the notion that an instructor's task is to deliver content. As the common curriculum moves from the present proposal stage into a phase of instructional design, it must disrupt the paradigm of the typical collegiate classroom experience, which pivots around instructional expertise, ancillary materials, and classroom activities (lecture, group work, discussion, etc.)

A curriculum is, by definition, testable. The assessment of outcomes within the liberal arts core must also embrace the spirit of innovation. Each course will have precisely defined outcomes based upon skills with demonstrable market salience. Assessment will focus on

the acquisition and application of skills both unique to individual core courses and common to the ten-course core.

5. Common Curriculum Draft

The Mary Baldwin University Common Curriculum
…lives of purpose and professional success…

The Key Curriculum
The MBU Key prepares students to create lives of purpose and professional success through a conceptually compelling and experientially immersive set of ten affiliate courses. As an outcome orientated introduction to a Mary Baldwin education, the MBU Key designs learning not around academic disciplines but around ways of knowing the world. The MBU Key asks students to consider how we know what we know and how we know we know it, while building market-salient skills like communication, collaboration, leadership, and data-fluency.

Key Features
- A suite of ten bespoke courses featuring innovative pedagogy and skill-based outcomes
- A curriculum that unlocks aspects of your current self and prospects for your future one
- A pedagogically innovative curriculum, team taught and experientially engaging
- A cutting-edge curriculum based on cognition not content – a core of courses you think with not just about

Key Values
- Community
- Collaboration
- Creativity
- Leadership
- Social Mobility

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The Key Courses
Learning Goals, Outcomes, and Skills

1. ENVIRONMENTS
The world around us

Goals
In this course, students will explore human existence within the broader context of global ecosystems and organismal diversity

Outcomes
As a result of participating in ENVIRONMENTS, students will be able to:
- Recognize and explain the impact of human activity on non-human organisms, particularly with respect to natural ecosystems
- Describe the concept of evolution as a broad framework for how organisms interact with their environment.
- Explain how different human cultures/societies impact the local and global environments
- Apply historical and scientific findings to better understand the impact of human society on climate change and resource availability
- Propose individual and societal solutions to global problems involving climate and sustainability

Skills
As a result of participating in ENVIRONMENTS, students will develop the following skills:
- Data fluency: comprehension and interpretation of primary research/historical documents
- Cultural Competency: appreciation of diversity and interdependency of living organisms)
- Communication: the presentation of data-based arguments
- Collaboration: development and practice of team-based problem-solving strategies at large and small scales
- Time-management: execution of independent and team tasks in a timely fashion
- Professionalism: presentation of work in a professional manner

2. COMPOSITION
Real Writing in a Virtual World

Goals
In this course, students will appraise and apply written communication across a variety of mediums, genres, and forms.

Outcomes
As a result of participating in COMPOSITION, students will be able to:
- Recognize relevant contexts for the production and reception of written communication
- Integrate carefully evaluated sources into reports and claim-based essays
- Interpret self- and peer-generated writing for clarity, correctness, and communication
- Produce and revise drafts for grammatical correctness, appropriate audience analysis, engagement with opposing ideas, and clear organization of ideas

Skills
As a result of participating in COMPOSITION, students will develop the following skills:
- Communication: integration of carefully evaluated sources into reports and claim-based essays
- Collaboration: peer-revision of drafts for grammatical correctness, appropriate audience analysis, engagement with opposing ideas, and clear organization of ideas
- Creativity: development of personal voice and expressivity
- Critical thinking: analysis of written communication
- Resilience: respond to constructive criticism of work
- Time-management: execution of independent and team tasks in a timely fashion
- Professionalism: presentation of work in a professional manner

3. DATA
Fundamentals of Scholarship

Goals

In this course, students will learn how to interpret and understand the world by creating and interpreting charts, graphs, and statistics.

Outcomes

As a result of participating in DATA, students will be able to:
- Construct and correctly interpret tables that make use of counts, ratios, proportions, percentages, percent changes, percentage point changes, means, medians, and standard deviations.
- Evaluate quantitative reasoning in news, company, government, and institutional reports, with an awareness of biases and misinterpretations of data.
- Construct and correctly interpret graphs of categorical and continuous variables.
- Construct and correctly interpret graphs that display relationships between variables.
- Demonstrate beginner skills in a statistical programming package such as R or Python.
- Complete a statistical analysis report and present the results.

Skills

As a result of participating in DATA, students will develop the following skills:
- Digital Competency: location of appropriate resources and scrutinization of their reliability.
- Communication: conveyance of basic thesis using oral and written methodologies
- Collaboration: work cooperatively and comfortably in teams
- Time-management: execution of independent and team tasks in a timely fashion
- Professionalism: presentation of work in a professional manner

4. CREATIVITY
Matters of art

Goals
In this course, students will recognize the role creative innovation plays in society at large through research, discovery, inquiry, and interpretation of literary, visual, and performing arts.

Outcomes
As a result of participating in CREATIVITY, students will be able to:
- Recognize creativity as a process of self-discovery and expression that transcends disciplines and media
- Interpret the symbolic languages through which creativity articulates
- Question metrics of aesthetic judgment across a broad range of media and forms
- Design presentation(s) that assess and communicate attributes of creativity in select examples

Skills
As a result of participating in CREATIVITY, students will develop the following skills:
- Cultural Competency: the recognition of diverse forms of self- and group-expressivity across cultures
- Communication: conveyance of basic arguments using oral and written methodologies
- Collaboration: work cooperatively and comfortably in teams
- Time-management: execution of independent and team tasks in a timely fashion
- Professionalism: presentation of work in a professional manner

5. REPRESENTATION
Phenomenal perspectives

Goals
In this course, students will come to comprehend the phenomena and value(s) of "lived experiences" and how they are mediated through systems of power.

Outcomes
As a result of participating in REPRESENTATION, students will be able to:
- Classify and extend theories – intersectionality, post-humanism, critical race studies, etc. – that illuminate the particulars of individual experience and perspective
- Appraise and question the way identity is mediated by society, culture, and forms of power
- Apply acquired knowledge for purposes of self-critique and self-expression
- Assemble theories of the self towards an understanding of identity formation

Skills
As a result of participating in REPRESENTATION, students will develop the following skills:
- Cultural competency: the recognition of diverse forms of self- and group-expressivity across cultures
- Literacy: the ability to "read" cultural texts
- Communication: conveyance of basic arguments using oral and written methodologies
- Collaboration: ability to work cooperatively and comfortably in teams
- Leadership: develop inclusive methods for leading (and following) within collaborative models.
- Time-management: execution of independent and team tasks in a timely fashion
- Professionalism: presentation of work in a professional manner

6. DOCUMENTS
Methods and materials

Goals

In this course, students will acquire archival tools, techniques, and terminology to conduct close analysis of documents, their meanings and their materializations, be they historical or contemporary.

Outcomes

As a result of participating in DOCUMENTS, students will be able to:
- Recognize the situatedness of historical and contemporary documents
- Inspect the material forms and formation of documents (including the digital)
- Appraise the relationship between forms of documentation and their content
- Discern the various ways in which documents embed and produce meaning

Skills

As a result of participating in DOCUMENTS, students will develop the following skills:
- Data Understanding: the recognition that data is not neutral but embedded in contexts of knowledge production
- Cultural Competency: discernment of the ways that documents record and produce culture – and are produced by it
- Communication: conveyance of basic arguments using oral and written methodologies
- Technical Competency: the ability to access, navigate, and manipulate digital documents
- Time-management: execution of independent and team tasks in a timely fashion
- Professionalism: presentation of work in a professional manner

7. DISCOVERY

How we know what we know

Goals

In this course, students will connect the execution and analysis of experiments and the use of evidence to evaluate how we arrive at discoveries about the natural and physical world.

Outcomes

As a result of participating in DISCOVERY, students will be able to:
- Name central precepts of the experimental process, including hypotheses, variables, and measurable outcomes
- Design an experiment based upon the principles of the scientific method
- Illustrate findings through appropriate means of conveyance
- Question the information supporting notable discoveries to appraise evidentiary bases and biases

Skills

As a result of participating in DISCOVERY, students will develop the following skills:
- Critical Thinking: the ability to assess validity and salience of experimentation
- Data Understanding: the appreciation of how data are acquired, displayed, and analyzed
- Digital Competency: development of rudimentary skills in data visualization (including R, Python, Tableau, etc.)
- Communication: explanation of basic justification and rationalization of conclusions using appropriate presentational media
- Time-management: execution of independent and team tasks in a timely fashion
- Professionalism: presentation of work in a professional manner

8. ETHICS
21st Century Ethical Implications in Globalization & Leadership

Goals

In this course, students will foster values and ethical standards to meet ethical incongruencies by enhancing leadership strengths in response to the complexity of ethical challenges in all fields.

Outcomes

As a result of participating in ETHICS, students will be able to:
- Understand the fundamental principles of ethics with basic concepts related to cultural awareness, knowledge, skills, desire, and encounters
- Explore cultural competency and ethical compliance in addressing globalization and integrating artificial intelligence into the practice field
- Create and evaluate ethical problem-solving skills through qualitative research to identify barriers in the society and/or the practice field.
- Apply strength-based leadership concepts to examine and solve challenging ethical dilemmas.

Skills

As a result of participating in ETHICS, students will develop the following skills:
- Cultural Competency: discernment of the ways that cultural competency demands ethical understanding
- Critical Thinking: the ability to engage in higher order contemplation of ethical underpinnings and imperatives
- Digital Competency: the sophisticated understanding of the ethical dimensions of AI incursions across all fields of practice
- Communication: conveyance of basic arguments using appropriate presentational media
- Time-management: execution of independent and team tasks in a timely fashion
- Professionalism: presentation of work in a professional manner

9. DECISIONS
Fundamentals of Leadership

Goals

In this course, students will make decisions, then analyze the contexts, methods, ethics, and implications of their decisions.

Outcomes

As a result of participating in DECISIONS, students will be able to:
- Use social science models to analyze decision processes and predict outcomes.
- Analyze the impact of social norms and ethical considerations on decisions.
- Recognize and interpret states of mutual interdependence – situations in which one's own decisions must take into account the actions and decisions made by others.
- Analyze case studies of decisions made by leaders of corporate, government, institutional and/or non-profit organizations.

Skills

As a result of participating in DECISIONS, students will develop the following skills:
- Leadership: an understanding of the way decisions rely on and exert social influence
- Collaboration: the ability to work and understand complexity in a team-based learning environment
- Critical Thinking: the ability to engage in higher order understanding
- Communication: conveyance of basic arguments using appropriate presentational media
- Time-management: execution of independent and team tasks in a timely fashion
- Professionalism: presentation of work in a professional manner

10. CHANGE
Altered states

Goals

In this research-based course students identify problems of global scale (social, environmental, etc.) and consider the relevant actors, their interests, and the methods they use to influence outcomes.

Outcomes:

As a result of participating in CHANGE students will be able to:
- Identify, describe, and assess significant social and environmental problems and the possibilities for and barriers to change.
- Recognize and assess the arguments made by competing global interests.
- Evaluate methods and processes for initiating change.
- Create and present a policy brief or action plan for a non-profit organization, business, or think-tank.

Skills

As a result of participating in CHANGE, students will develop the following skills:
- Critical thinking: the ability to engage in higher order understanding
- Communication: conveyance of basic arguments using appropriate presentational media
- Cultural Competency: discernment of the ways that cultural competency demands ethical understanding
- Collaboration: the ability to work and understand complexity in a team-based learning environment