



Academic Portfolio Creative Team Update

October 13, 2023

Executive Summary

In its founding charge to the Academic Portfolio Creative Team (APCT), the MBU Board of Trustees tasked the team with establishing “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.” It further charged the APCT to “present the newly established undergraduate academic portfolio for Board of Trustees approval” at the Oct. 19-20 meeting.

As the fulfillment of that mandate, the APCT report provides an update on the academic portfolio. The report below presents a new 10-course general education curriculum and an academic portfolio consisting of 18 majors:

- 12 continuing majors
- 3 consolidated/reconceptualized majors
- 3 proposed majors
- 23 majors to be discontinued

Since the August meeting, beyond refining the proposed academic portfolio, the APCT has started building syllabi for the Key Curriculum (revised general education courses) and exploring staffing models for the new suite of majors. Additionally, the VP/deans, associate deans, program directors, and faculty have developed teachout plans based on the proposed discontinued majors.

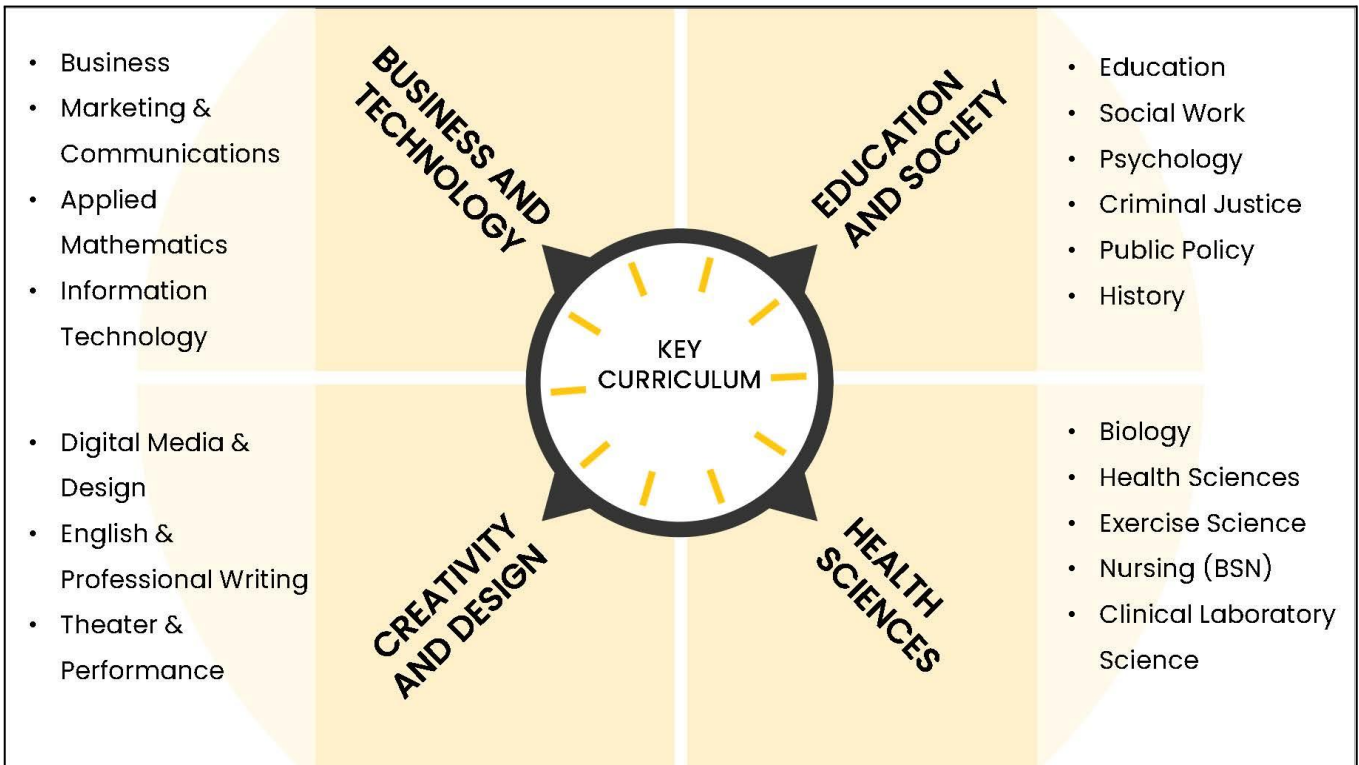
The Key Curriculum: Gen Ed at MBU

As shared in the July Board meeting, the new Key Curriculum will consist of ten inter- and post-disciplinary courses that are designed to provide students with foundation liberal arts skills. The ten courses will be delivered to students over their first two years at MBU, intentionally scaffolded for first and second-year students.

Year 1	Year 2
Data Composition Documents Discovery Creativity	Decisions Ethics Representation Environments Reflection/Perspectives

Brief course descriptions and learning outcomes were shared in the July Board meeting materials, and a faculty-led subcommittee is now working on developing syllabi in preparation for submission to SACSCOC for approval.

The Compass: Meta-Majors and Majors at MBU



“The Compass” consists of industry-aligned academic pathways focused on four sectors of the economy:

- Health Sciences
- Education and Society
- Creativity and Design
- Business and Technology

The creative team made minor adjustments to the proposed academic portfolio presented in August based on consultation with Board members, administration, and faculty, and after reviewing additional institutional data, market research, and new information discovered during the teachout planning process.

Following the Board’s August 31 endorsement of the preliminary list of majors to be continued, the administration enlisted the services of Alchemy, a higher ed research firm, to market-test the majors. Preliminary results, presented to Executive Staff in early October, broadly confirm the alignment between MBU’s suite of majors and regional job openings and growth. Historically strong majors at MBU like Criminal Justice, Biology, Health Sciences, and Psychology continue to demonstrate market salience. Traditional liberal arts disciplines like History, English, Math anchor the curriculum by building in-demand skills. And Alchemy’s initial research demonstrates considerable market appetite for new majors in Nursing, IT, and Digital Media Design. Alchemy’s report – combined with earlier research commissioned from our partners at EAB – endorse the APCT’s approach to building a suite of industry-aligned, skill-building majors that include the best of the liberal arts tradition with an outcome-oriented education.

Potential Discontinued Majors

- Arts Management
- Anthropology/Sociology*
- Asian Studies*
- Biochemistry
- Business Economics
- Chemistry
- Communication*
- Economics
- Environmental Biology
- Film*
- International Affairs
- International Economics and Business*
- International Relations
- LAES*

- Music
- Physics
- Political Science
- Sociology
- Sociology/Psychology*
- Spanish*
- Studio Arts
- Philosophy and Religious Studies
- Religion

*Majors discontinued between 2017 and 2022 that still have faculty teaching select courses

Additional Updates & Considerations

- **Teach-Outs:** Majors on the list of discontinued programs have begun developing teach-out plans for students currently enrolled in that major. SACSCOC requires that all teach-out plans are created by faculty members in the related departments and that sufficient time is given to this planning. Every student must receive an individualized teach-out plan from the university. These plans will be communicated with students once the finalized list of discontinued majors has been approved. Due to policies stated in the 2023-24 academic catalog, students who are undeclared, may declare into a program slated for discontinuation through the end of the academic year. Due to this timeframe, additional teachout plans may need to be created in the spring term, which could impact staffing plans.
- **Minors:** Following the Board of Trustees meeting, the APCT will take the next steps in revising the academic portfolio by reviewing the list of minors currently offered at the institution to determine the future role of minors at MBU. This review will take into consideration the relevance of minors across different academic pathways, elective opportunities, and building in opportunities for students to complete certificates relevant to their chosen program.

APPENDIX 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.

Composition of the Academic Portfolio Creative Team

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