Boise State University’s
Foundations Program
March 2010

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I. OVERVIEW

This document provides a draft of the Foundations program, the program proposed by the Core Reform Task Force to replace Boise State’s current Core curriculum. As a sketch, many of the important details are to be determined; however, it is sufficiently complete and detailed to serve its intended purposes of deliberation and further development.

The Foundations program emerges from a multi-year process orchestrated by the Core Reform Task Force, which included regular Task Force meetings, open fora for faculty and staff, targeted meetings with faculty and administrators, examination of various programs around the country, and consultations with experts in general education requirements in higher ed.¹

The Task Force’s goal was to develop a highly effective general education program, one that is demonstrably valuable to Boise State undergraduates, and one that addresses the shortcomings of the current Core curriculum that are identified in the Task Force’s 2009 Progress Report: lack of vision, inadequate coherence and oversight at the curricular level, and insufficient attention to outcomes and assessment at the course level. (See Section II of the Progress Report.)²

The balance of this document describes the details of the Foundations program, but its distinguishing features and benefits are summarized in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Benefit</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Courses structured around a small number of specific, clearly-articulated learning outcomes</td>
<td>Inspires confidence that the goals of general education are being met; simpler and more clear for instructors and students</td>
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<tr>
<td>More inclusive learning outcomes: ethics, diversity and internationalization, teamwork and innovation</td>
<td>Fully integrates highly valuable and sought-after traits into the program; not tacked on as afterthoughts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Built-in assessment process for key learning outcomes</td>
<td>Fosters efficient program review for improvement and accreditation</td>
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<tr>
<td>First-year seminar, learning communities, service learning, capstone experience</td>
<td>Increases student success and retention</td>
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¹ http://academics.boisestate.edu/provost/core-reform-task-force/
Expanded connections between gen-ed program and majors | Yields a more coherent academic experience for students and instructors
---|---
Coordination with Student Affairs to develop a co-curricular “transcript”/portrait | Documents leadership and community service experiences for prospective employers
Financial incentives for faculty and departments who participate | Rewards collaboration, deepens connection between support for general education and support for degree programs

### II. PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

The Foundations program is organized around eleven University learning outcomes (ULO’s)\(^3\), which every Boise State graduate is expected to have met, regardless of major or baccalaureate degree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foundations Program University Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Cluster Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Write effectively in multiple contexts, for a variety of audiences.</td>
<td>Writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Communicate effectively in speech, both as speaker and listener.</td>
<td>Oral Communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Engage in effective critical inquiry by defining problems, gathering and evaluating evidence, and determining the adequacy of argumentative discourse.</td>
<td>Critical Inquiry</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Think creatively about complex problems in order to produce, evaluate, and implement innovative possible solutions, often as one member of a team.</td>
<td>Innovation &amp; Teamwork</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Analyze ethical issues in personal, professional, and civic life and produce reasoned evaluations of competing value systems and ethical claims.</td>
<td>Ethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Apply knowledge of cultural differences to matters of local, regional, national, and international importance, including political, economic, and environmental issues.</td>
<td>Diversity &amp; Internationalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Apply knowledge and the methods of reasoning characteristic of mathematics, statistics, and other formal systems to solve complex problems.</td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Apply knowledge and the methods characteristic of scientific inquiry to think critically about and solve theoretical and practical problems about physical structures and processes.</td>
<td>Natural and Physical Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Apply knowledge and methods characteristic of the visual and performing arts to explain and appreciate the significance of aesthetic products and creative activities.</td>
<td>Visual and Performing Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Apply knowledge and the methods of inquiry characteristic of literature and other humanities disciplines to interpret and produce texts expressive of the human condition.</td>
<td>Literature and Humanities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Apply knowledge and the methods of inquiry characteristic of the social sciences to explain and evaluate human behavior and institutions.</td>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^3\) These were inspired by the AAC&U’s “LEAP” framework: http://www.aacu.org/leap/index.cfm
ULO’s 1-6 are competency-based outcomes that are developed throughout the academic career and in multiple courses and contexts. After exposure to these ULO’s in early courses, students revisit these ULO’s in greater depth throughout their college experiences.

ULO’s 7-11 are associated with disciplinary course clusters that represent perspectives to be encountered during a student’s academic career.

The disciplinary clusters are clearly not mutually-exclusive: a particular course might be such that reasons could be given for including it in several different clusters. However, it is assumed that for each course there will be a cluster whose learning outcomes fit the course most naturally, and all sections of the course in question must belong to that cluster.

III. SUPPORT STRUCTURES FOR THE LEARNING OUTCOMES

The eleven learning outcomes are supported primarily by traditional coursework, but also by co-curricular activities. We discuss each of these in turn.

There are four types of courses that support the ULO’s: ENGL courses, Foundations courses, Communication in the Discipline (CID) courses, and Disciplinary Lenses courses (DL). All but the first type are new course designations.

All course types are organized around carefully-articulated, course-level learning outcomes with associated assessment rubrics designed to determine a student’s level of success in achieving the target outcome(s). (See Appendix A for a sample rubric from the AAC&U “VALUE” project.)

A. Communication Courses

These courses are designed to support ULO’s 1 and 2.

1. First Year Writing Courses: ENGL101 / ENGL102

An introduction to the writing and research expectations of the university and to the study of writing contexts.

• A two-course sequence (six credits total)\(^4\)
• Coordinated, staffed, and assessed by the First Year Writing Program (housed within the Department of English).
• English 101: “Introduction to College Writing” builds the reflective awareness needed for success in a wide range of writing experiences within the university. Students write, receive feedback on their writing, and give feedback to others. Introduces academic writing conventions (e.g., use of library, sources, and a citation system). Students also engage with challenging readings and begin putting others’ ideas in conversation with their own.
• English 102: “Introduction to College Writing and Research” explores how writers form their own research questions, and in how academic writers generate new ideas by engaging in an ongoing conversation through sustained research. Writers consider many perspectives on their subjects and speak to and sometimes against those ideas as they explore what they think. This kind of writing occurs through close interactions with a wide range of sources. While the course emphasizes academic research, it also considers how inquiry informs all kinds of writing within the academy and beyond.
• Selected first-year writing courses are taught with library-based co-requisites, in learning communities (e.g., linked to IF100), or with integrated service-learning projects.

\(^4\) Current policies for placement into First-Year Writing courses will remain in place.
2. Communication in the Discipline (CID)

- A course within the major department at the 200-level or above (not necessarily conducted in English), designed to extend students’ experience with ULO’s 1 and 2. For students who have successfully completed ENGL 101/102
- Focused on written and oral communication as they are practiced within the discipline
- The Boise State Curriculum Committee’s subcommittee on Communication (see Section V below) would develop criteria and approve courses in the major that could have the CID designation
- Support for instruction in CID courses, including staff development for faculty teaching CID courses and direct tutorial services for students, would be coordinated by the Subcommittee on Communication and the university Writing Across the Curriculum Director (Boise State Writing Center).
- Assessment conducted within departments, reports submitted to Foundations Director each spring (see Sections VI and VIII below)

B. Foundations Courses

This sequence of three courses is designed to support ULO’s 1-6.

1. Intellectual Foundations (IF100)

- A three credit, first-year seminar required of all new students to Boise State; communicates to students the value of a liberal education and the role of the Foundations program in their undergraduate career
- Supports ULO’s 2, 3, 4: oral communication, critical inquiry, innovation & teamwork
- Envisioned as small discussion sections (~25 students) that meet twice per week
- Discussion sections converge once per week in a large lecture sections (~200 students)
- Discussion sections taught by instructor of record; common learning outcomes, core expectations, and assessment measures across discussion sections, but flexible with respect to particular assignments, activities, and instructional style
- Lecture sections structured so as to facilitate interdisciplinary teaching
- Taught by Foundations faculty (see Section VII below)
- Organized around overarching questions: What does it mean to be engaged in inquiry? How do different disciplines investigate similar issues? Are there limits to inquiry within a particular discipline? If so, what are they, and what explains them?
- Variable topics of inquiry proposed by faculty, such as global sustainability, the world economy, infinity, water, etc.
- A limited number of sections are envisioned to constitute student learning communities in which instructors of IF100 would collaborate with instructors of ENGL 101/102 sections to create rich, cross-disciplinary teaching and learning experiences within both courses.
- Could incorporate the First Year Read selection
- Students introduced to course portfolios, which are used intentionally to track student progress with respect to the ULO’s being supported in IF100 and in CF200

5 While CID courses provide a space for students to study disciplinary writing, writing and oral communication should continue to be integrated throughout all courses, as appropriate.

Foundations Program 4
2. Civic and Ethical Foundations (CF200)

- Three credit course for students at the sophomore level
- Support ULO’s 1, 5, 6: writing, ethics, diversity & internationalization
- Medium-sized classes (~40 students) typically delivered in standard face-to-face format; hybrid option possible
- Documentation of an experiential learning activity related to the relevant ULO’s is required of every student. For example, instructors will be encouraged to utilize service-learning as a pedagogical strategy required of all students in his/her section.
- Taught by Foundations faculty (see Section VII below)
- Portfolios from IF100 are expanded and enhanced

3. Finishing Foundations (FF400)

- 1-3 credit culminating experience offered within the major department
- Course title will bear a departmentally-determined subtitle – for example, “FF400: Senior Thesis in Psychology”
- Support ULO’s 3 and 4: critical inquiry and innovation
- Departments currently offering capstone courses would be encouraged to convert them to this format; departments without any such course would either be required to create one or to find an appropriate surrogate (whether at the college-level or in another program)
- Interdisciplinary research, team teaching, and community-based projects would be highly desirable, where applicable
- Assessment conducted within departments, reports submitted to Foundations Director each spring (see Sections VI and VIII below)

C. Disciplinary Lens (DL) Courses

The title “Disciplinary Lens” is intended to highlight the belief that different disciplines maintain distinctive methods and perspectives; a familiarity with multiple perspectives is necessary in order to approach having a complete “picture” of the human condition and the world that we inhabit.

These courses resemble the courses that populate the current Core curriculum in that their content and methodology are situated squarely within the discipline of the department offering the course. For example, we envision CHEM 101, COMM 101, FRENCH 101, HIST 101, MATH 124, PHYS 100, PHIL 101, SOC 101, THEA 101, and a host of other Core courses transitioning into one of the DL course clusters. New courses will surely also be designed.

Despite the fundamental similarities between the DL portion of the Foundations program and current Core courses, there also several important differences:

1. Every academic department is strongly encouraged to offer at least one DL section per semester.
2. Departments should tailor DL courses for broad appeal and academic value beyond their own majors, rather than as foundations courses for majors.

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7 A Foundations course designed for certain transfer students is also planned (see Section V below).
8 The assumption is that these experiences would utilize the centralized support of the Service-Learning Program and that the SL Program will provide necessary online project registration and faculty development. It is important to note that the focus on SL in the CF200 course does not imply that SL cannot be used in other courses within the Foundations program. As is the case now, instructors may choose this pedagogical approach in any course that they teach.
3. Like their Foundations course counterparts, DL courses are designed to serve carefully-articulated disciplinary cluster rubrics (i.e., a rubric for one of ULO’s 7-11. See Appendix B for a sample rubric and course design plan for ULO 8.)

4. Additionally, each DL course must address one of the ULO’s 1-6 (e.g., a DLS-COMM 101 course would serve ULO 2).

5. Over time, pairs or trios of DL courses may be conjoined to form learning communities.

Differences (1) acknowledges the potential relevance of every academic discipline to undergraduate education and is intended to correct the longstanding but mistaken expectation that only “liberal arts departments” can contribute to a liberal education. The disciplinary clusters are structured in such a way as to provide natural “homes” for disciplines while also providing opportunities for departments to offer courses that fall outside their traditionally-conceived disciplinary boundaries.

Difference (2) is intended to address “gateway syndrome”, a condition affecting students taking a Core course outside of the area of their major when the course in question functions as a foundations course for its associated major, rather than as a gen ed course. Such students rarely develop a lasting appreciation for the significance of the discipline and frequently express bewilderment in the fact that they are required to take such courses. Some instructors dilute the content to better serve non-majors, but this compromise rarely serves either majors or non-majors well. Wherever possible, DL courses should be conceived not as introductory courses, but rather as terminal courses, since it is likely (though not exceptionlessly true) that each DL course will be the only course in that particular discipline that is taken by many of the students.

Difference (3) is intended to ensure that the course in question does indeed expose the students to the concepts, bodies of knowledge, and methods that are distinctive of the disciplinary cluster. Assessment reports will be submitted to Foundations Director by a committee of Foundations faculty each spring (see Sections V and VII below).

Difference (4) is intended to strengthen and deepen the competencies embodied in ULO’s 1-6, which are by design outcomes “to be developed over time and in multiple contexts.”

Difference (5) is intended to capitalize on a highly effective pedagogical practice.

It is worth emphasizing that courses within a particular cluster could come from any discipline, provided that the cluster’s learning outcomes are central to the course design and the associated assessment rubric is demonstrably employed in evaluating coursework. For example, the Foundations program will permit an appropriately designed course offered by Kinesiology to be a member of the DLN cluster (Natural and Physical Sciences), and a course offered by a Health Sciences department might well be a member of the DLS cluster (Social Sciences).

D. Co-Curricular Activities

In addition to traditional coursework, students will be encouraged to use their co-curricular activities to support their learning of the intended outcomes of the Foundations program. Many student activities are quite relevant to the larger goals embodied in the institution’s mission and, more specifically, to the intended outcomes of the Foundations program. In order to facilitate this, staff in Student Affairs can choose to use the ULO’s relevant to particular co-curricular activity to focus or guide the student experience. Familiar examples of such activities are internships, credit for prior learning, student government and other university activities that are not credit-bearing. The use of the Foundations framework beyond the student academic
experience will serve to reinforce the importance of the goals for student learning and will help students to develop a broader picture of the purpose of the ULO's.

To date, the University has had no means to assess or document such activities and (relatedly) little way of providing additional motivation for students to participate in them. The Division of Student Affairs has proposed creating co-curricular student “profiles” as a way of addressing this need. Co-curricular profiles are supplements to the official academic transcript, not a proper part of the transcript. The activities and experiences documented in such a profile could span a broad range of possibilities: participation in student government or other campus organization, attending lectures or taking part in other events on campus, engaging in community service, and so on. Student Affairs would coordinate with the Foundations Program Office (see Section VI below) to review and approve proposed elements of the co-curricular profile and to develop mechanism of assessment; Student Affairs would be charged with conducting the assessment and maintaining the profile.

IV. CORE VS. FOUNDATIONS CREDIT LOADS

The typical Core credit load compares to that of the Foundations program as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core (ENGL)</th>
<th>Foundations (IF100)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 101</td>
<td>3 cr.</td>
<td>6 cr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 102</td>
<td>3 cr.</td>
<td>6 cr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area I</td>
<td>12 cr.</td>
<td>15 cr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area II</td>
<td>12 cr.</td>
<td>15 cr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area III (incl. Math)</td>
<td>11-13 cr.</td>
<td>23-25 cr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>41-43 cr.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- IF100 (Intellectual Found.) 3 cr.
- ENGL 101 3 cr.
- ENGL 102 3 cr.
- CF200 (Civic & Ethical Found.) 3 cr.
- CID (Comm. In Discipline) 3 cr. (typical)\(^9\)
- DLM (Mathematics) 3-5 cr.
- DLN (Natural & Physical Sciences) 7 cr.\(^10\)
- DLV (Visual & Performing Arts) 3 cr.
- DLL (Literature and Humanities) 3 cr.
- DLS (Social Sciences) 6 cr.
- FF400 (Finishing Found.) 1-3 cr.\(^8\)

Total: 38-42 cr.

As these figures show, the credit load for the Foundations program represents a slight reduction from the current Core curriculum, but it remains in compliance with the Idaho State Board of Education Governing Policies and Procedures, Section III, Subsection V ("Articulation and Associate Degree Policy"), which requires a minimum of 36 credits.

There are several noteworthy facts about the Foundations credit load as it compares to the State Board requirements and the current Core:

- The Core curriculum requires the minimum number of credits in Mathematics and Natural Sciences required by the State Board but exceeds those requirements for Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences by 12 credits. Consequently, the credit load borne by Foundations courses is counteracted by a reduced credit load for Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences. (See Section VI below.)
- Many degree programs already include courses that would satisfy the CID requirement. For those that do not, it is likely that at least one required course within the major would be a candidate for modification to meet the requirement.

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\(^8\) This requirement will typically also meet a requirement within the major.
\(^10\) At least one of the two courses taken within the DLN cluster must have a laboratory component.
• Similarly, the FF400 requirement would probably be satisfied by existing courses in well over half of the fifty-odd baccalaureate degree programs offered (ignoring various emphases and sub-programs). Modification of course structure or requirements would undoubtedly be necessary in some cases. Those programs with no capstone experience of any form would be required to create one that is consistent with the Foundations guidelines.

• Academic programs will have the opportunity to apply for a limited number of DL course waivers for students in their program. Such waivers will be granted if the department can show department assessment results that indicate that students meet the university learning outcome(s) supported by the DL courses in question. For example, the department of Civil Engineering might apply for and be granted a waiver of DLM (Mathematics) and DLN (Natural and Physical Sciences) courses if assessment results can show that students are supported to meet ULO’s 7 and 8 through the courses required for their major study.

• Programs would remain free both to require specific courses within disciplinary clusters (e.g., History within DLS or Literature within DLL) and to impose additional requirements over the minimum requirements specified in the Foundations program.

Although the credit load associated with the Foundations program is not significantly smaller than that associated with the current Core, it loads those credits more efficiently. Thus, it should result in an overall reduction in the number of gen-ed-specific sections required for a student body of fixed size and should, on average, expedite students’ time to graduation.

V. TRANSFER AND ARTICULATION

The transition from Core to Foundations will introduce questions about transfer credits and articulation agreements with other State institutions. We address some of the more prominent issues below.

A. Advanced Placement Credits

Students entering the University with AP credits may apply them toward Foundations requirements just as they have been toward Core requirements, with the same conditions and restrictions. While AP classes are not likely to resemble the DL replacements for their former Core counterparts, it would be imprudent to penalize high-achieving students by refusing to accept AP credits in the established tradition.

B. Incoming Transfer Students with Associates Degrees

As the College of Western Idaho gains a foothold in the Treasure Valley, an increasing number of students will enter Boise State with associates degrees. Such students will be relieved from taking ENGL101/102, IF100, CF200, and all DL courses. In lieu of the two lower-level Foundations courses, these students will be required to take a transfer-specific Foundations course (“Transfer Foundations, TF300”), which (a) will serve the learning outcomes supported by IF100 and CF200 with higher achievement expectations, and (b) will count as 3 credits toward the upper-division credits requirement for graduation.

Associate-degree-holding transfer students will also be required to take appropriate CID and FF400 courses, but these are expected to be courses that will satisfy major requirements for the degree.
C. Incoming Transfer Students without Associates Degrees

The credit load for ENGL101/102 and DL courses is 28-30 credits. Students whose transfer credits satisfy at least 75% of this credit load (21 of the 28 minimum) will be permitted to take TF300 in lieu of IF100 and CF200. Students whose transfer credits satisfy less than 75% of this credit load (fewer than 21 credits) will be required to take IF100 and CF200.

D. Outgoing Transfer Students

Because the Foundations program is in compliance with SBOE requirements, students transferring to sister institutions within Idaho should encounter no additional difficulty than do those students who currently transfer out under the Core requirements. Articulation agreements will need to be modified to reflect the Foundations nomenclature. Foundations courses will transfer as general education electives in satisfaction of the SBOE requirements.

VI. ADMINISTRATION

The current Core curriculum at Boise State is fully distributed: Core courses are designed, delivered, and assessed (with the aid of the Core Curriculum Committee) by independent academic units with relatively little oversight. Many of the undesirable features of the current Core identified in the Task Force’s Progress Report can be traced to the distributed nature of the Core.

The Foundations Program is a hybrid in terms of centralization: DL courses are developed and assessed by individual academic units within the parameters of the DL cluster, whereas Foundations courses are developed and taught with centralized oversight and support. The goal of the Foundations program administrative structure is to place faculty at the center of program development, approval, assessment and instruction while providing leadership, stature, incentive, and resources for collaboration and the successful implementation of the program.

In order that sustained oversight and leadership be in place, the Core Reform Task Force recommends that the position of Foundations Program Director be created, supported by a half-time, dedicated staff member and supplemental staff support from the office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies. The Task Force does not make this recommendation lightly. Decentralized models were considered (e.g., ones in which academic departments identify a faculty member as an Assessment Coordinator), but the Task Force is of the firm opinion that the program will be far more effective – and less burdensome for departments – if course scheduling, assessment analysis, and other coordinating activities were executed centrally.

The duties of the Foundations Director would include:

- Working with department chairs to recruit Foundations faculty (see Section VI below)
- Collaborating with the Center for Teaching and Learning and the Writing Across the Curriculum Director to provide appropriate professional development for Foundations program faculty
- Tracking and distributing funds to support Foundations faculty
- Communicating and collaborating with Foundations faculty on questions of course design and assessment
• Communicating and coordinating with departmental faculty and the Writing Across the Curriculum Director on questions related to CID courses
• Coordinating writing tutorial services for Foundations students with the Director of the Boise State Writing Center.
• Shepherding courses through the administrative approval process
• Overseeing the assessment process by helping to create clear standards and processes for assessment, and coordinating the committees that conduct the assessment and document the results
• Reviewing student teaching evaluations of Foundations courses before forwarding to department chairs
• Making determinations with respect to continued participation of faculty within the Foundations program
• Functioning as Department Chair for routine administrative student issues (reviewing academic adjustments, addressing concerns in a Foundations course, etc.)

The office for the Foundations Director should be centrally located on campus, probably in the Administration building, since some staff support will be provided by the office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies. The Director will report to the Vice Provost and should meet regularly with the Deans Council to ensure support for the program.

With such oversight, some existing committee structures could be streamlined. As one possibility, the University Curriculum Committee and the Core Curriculum Committee could merge into one body called “Boise State Curriculum Committee”. This committee could have subcommittees for various functions and foci. The subcommittees might include: (1) IF100 and CF200, inclusive of approving courses, assessing outcomes and approving “significant community experiences”; (2) DL clusters to identify outcomes, approve cluster courses and assess outcomes of courses; (3) FF400 approval of program culminating experiences; (4) ULO’s assessment (with support of institutional research); (5) CID courses, inclusive of approving courses and assessing outcomes and (5) overall curriculum approval (which currently falls to the University Curriculum Committee).

VII. STAFFING

The Foundations program is a coherent program of study that every Boise State graduate is expected to have experienced in pursuit of his or her degree. As such, the instructors responsible for delivering the coursework must understand and commit themselves to the goals of the program. The instructional staff required to deliver the lower-level Foundations courses (IF100, CF200, and TF300) is equivalent to that of a medium-to-large academic department, since every student admitted to the University will be taking them in some combination.

Foundations courses are the cornerstones of a student’s education at Boise State. The comparatively high degree of consistency and coordination among sectional offerings requires that some courses within the program be staffed and delivered with centralized oversight. Other courses within the Foundations program are far more flexible and (by design) discipline-specific. The oversight of these courses properly belongs at the unit level.
• FF400, CID, and DL courses will be delivered at the departmental level with centralized developmental and assessment support
• IF100, CF200, and TF300 will be taught by Foundations faculty, who will be recruited from academic departments by the Foundations Director to serve three-year terms (renewable) in the program while holding joint appointments in their home department
• Memoranda of understanding will be signed by the Foundations Director, prospective Foundations faculty member, and the Chair of the faculty member’s home department, describing the terms of the Foundations appointment, particularly as it relates to assignment of workload units
• The typical workload assignment for Foundations faculty will be 5 WU’s teaching and 2 WU’s service per semester (14 WU’s in total per academic year)
• Effort associated with those workload units will be applied to high-level curricular design (e.g., developing rubrics), course design, classroom instruction, and assessment analysis
• Responsibility for annual evaluation of Foundations faculty will be retained by the Chair of the faculty member’s home department
• Copies of student evaluations for IF100, CF200, and TF300 courses will be forwarded to the Chair of the faculty member’s home department
• Instructors without assigned workloads (primarily adjunct faculty) could also apply for Foundations faculty status and be selected on the basis of established criteria
• Eligibility criteria will be established by Foundations faculty committees to identify faculty with the necessary experiences, skills, and motivations to teach Foundations courses
• Professional development programming offered by the CTL would be required of all first-time Foundations faculty
• Foundations faculty would retain their regular salary, and replacement money would be transferred to the home department to cover the instructional expenses resulting from the faculty member’s reassignment and to compensate the department for their contribution to the program (see Section VIII below)
• It is highly desirable that Foundations faculty represent a wide variety of disciplines

Staffing of DL courses remains entirely within departmental purview. In signing on to teach a DL course, an instructor thereby agrees to support and assess the specified ULO’s for the course in question. Noteworthy considerations:

• The reduction of total credits moving from Core to Foundations would very likely reduce typical student FTE loads for some academic units.
• The requirement of Foundations courses should further reduce student FTE loads for those units (though it’s likely that some of the department’s faculty will be hired to teach Foundations courses).
• Since every academic unit on campus is encouraged to offer at least one DL course per semester, departments that have not historically contributed to the Core will contribute to the Foundations program, both to enrich educational opportunities for students and to further integrate the department’s programs with the undergraduate curriculum.
• Those programs that decouple their DL courses from the major will be free to make their traditional lower-division courses (which formerly served as watered-down gateway courses) more rigorous, providing opportunities to streamline programs.

Staffing of CID courses will be within departmental purview. The Writing Across the Curriculum Director will work with departments to identify and adopt recognized best-practices for these kinds of courses.
The “transfer” of 12 credits from Area I and Area II Core to Foundations courses will have two important consequences: student demand for classes in the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences will decline, and the resulting increase in instructional capacity from those areas will be applied to Foundations courses. The following represents one natural projection of shift in student demand from Core to Foundations.

- **ENGL 101/102**: no change – Core meets minimum State Board requirements
- **Mathematics**: little change – Core meets minimum State Board requirements
- **Natural/Physical Sciences**: little change – Core meets minimum State Board requirements
- **Arts & Humanities**: 30% of current demand potentially redirected to IF100 and CF200
- **Social Sciences**: 30% of current demand potentially redirected to IF100 and CF200

“Little” change (rather than none) is projected for Mathematics and the Natural/Physical Sciences on account of the fact that classes with a prefix other than MATH might be included in the DL.M course cluster, and similar considerations apply to the DL.N cluster.

In practical terms, departments currently contributing to Area I and Area II of the Core curriculum should expect to see a reduction in demand for seats filled in satisfaction of the “core course in third/any field” requirement specified in the catalog degree tables, since the total credits required for such classes is reduced within the Foundations program.

The lower-division Foundations courses that take up the slack the Area I and Area II demand will surely include methods, content, and experiences that are included in traditional Arts and Humanities and Social Sciences classes, and so advocates for the importance of those disciplinary perspectives (as many of us are) should take particular interest in the development and delivery of IF100 and CF200. None of these courses will focus exclusively on any particular discipline, however, since they are by design interdisciplinary.

**VIII. COURSE APPROVAL AND ASSESSMENT**

Within the Foundations program, course design, approval, and assessment are all cut from the same cloth. By organizing a course around a set of meaningful course-level outcomes that are linked to an assessment rubric, an instructor simultaneously commends the value of the course for its intended purpose and also prepares the ground for efficient and effective assessment without the need to reconstruct the connection between course activities and outcomes after the fact for external “auditors” (e.g., the Core Curriculum Committee).

**A. Course Approval**

- For each of the competencies-based ULO’s (1-6) a committee of Foundations faculty will be charged with designing an assessment rubric for their respective ULO’s. These rubrics will be approved by the relevant subcommittee of the Boise State Curriculum Committee.
- Foundations courses are developed and proposed by faculty across departments and colleges, and approved by the subcommittee mentioned above.
- Ad hoc committees of disciplinary experts will be formed and charged with designing an assessment rubric for each of the ULO’s in 7-11, which will be reviewed and approved by the relevant subcommittee of the Boise State Curriculum Committee.
• Courses are admitted into the DL portion of the Foundations program by applying to be included in one of the five disciplinary clusters, a process overseen by the Boise State Curriculum Committee in consultation with the Foundations Coordinator.

• DL course approval should be conducted with a view to represent as many of ULO’s 1-6 as possible within each disciplinary cluster. When necessary, the committee may solicit proposals for DL courses that specifically serve an under-represented foundational or civic ULO.

• The process of approving CID courses for inclusion in the Foundations program will be overseen by the appropriate subcommittee of the Boise State Curriculum Committee.

B. Assessment

Poorly designed and poorly administered assessment has the potential to be tedious and of dubious value, especially when it is “tacked on” to courses after the fact and when the instruments and strategies used are unwieldy or of suspect quality. Yet it is absolutely crucial that we, as instructors and an institution, investigate and gather evidence about the extent to which our classes and degree programs are preparing students for life beyond campus, and then use that information to make changes and improvements. Therefore, it is imperative that manageable and meaningful assessment processes be employed throughout our general education program.

In order for the process to be manageable, it should be built into the course structure from the outset, rather than being layered on as an additional exercise. In order for the process to deliver meaningful results, it must be designed around carefully-crafted learning outcomes. Both of these desiderata are met by the Foundations framework.

For each ULO, specific assessment rubrics will be used to determine to what degree the student satisfies the outcome in question. These rubrics will be provided to Foundations, DL, and CID course developers and instructors, and their implementation should be integrated into the assessment of course activities. Results will facilitate not only grade assignments for individual students, but also course assessment. Instructors of Foundations, DL, and CID courses will submit materials each January and May for Fall and Spring courses, respectively. Assessment results would be compiled and analyzed each summer by committee under the supervision of the Foundations Director. During the academic year, the Boise State Curriculum Committee would be involved in supporting the mechanics of course approval and assessment.

In the future, it would be highly desirable to move to a program in which each student maintains an undergraduate portfolio (perhaps in electronic form) that includes documents demonstrating their satisfaction of each learning outcome. From the student perspective, such portfolios could serve as valuable supplements to the traditional application materials provided to prospective employers. From the departmental perspective, they would function as a durable record of student achievement and facilitate more meaningful program assessment.