Present: Carlos Huerta, Patricia Hill, Blair Sterba-Boatwright, James Carter, M.K. Balasubramanya, Susan W. Murphy, Joseph Jozwiak, Patrick Crowley, Pamela Meyer, Dave Grise.

1. Opening: Dr. Huerta introduced and welcomed everybody. He initiated a discussion about the Core curriculum. He said the reason for the meeting is because the Core curriculum committee is not a true representative of the faculty that teach in the Core curriculum and he wanted the faculty that teach in the Core to get together and discuss issues and share concerns.

2. Brief overview of THECB Core rules: Dr. Huerta explained the Texas Higher Education Core Board and said that they set rules for what can and cannot happen with the Core curriculum even though we still have freedom to design the Core. The learning goals from the Core assessments came from the state rules. The Core should not just be about the institution, but it is statewide and we have to accept Core classes from other institutions in the state.

   The Core curriculum chart is broken down with every school in the state having the same distribution of hours in chart I. Dr. Huerta said that every school must have at least 42 hours, which is where chart II comes in, and in chart III our Core is discussed with 49 hours that includes economics, communications, and professional ethics courses. Dr. Huerta brought up the issue of the 120 hour rule, which is a state law. He said that at the last meeting, the decision was made to leave the Core alone. Dr. Huerta said that some people thing our Core is large, but it is in line with other schools when compared.

   Dr. Huerta said that about 35% of students take both sections of seminar because it is not required. The committee recommended over the summer to not count the seminars in with the Core hours, but require it of all full time first year students.

   Dr. Crowley asked where the flexibility was with this chart. Dr. Huerta said that History and Political Science probably have the least amount of flexibility because, even though other schools have different numbering systems, every student has to have 6 hours of history, political science, and composition. These courses may have a different name or a different number, but must have the same content to be counted in the core.

   Dr. Crowley then asked where in the charts can the resource committee offer options for students to take. Dr. Huerta said that there is some flexibility in the Math and Sciences. Dr. Crowley suggested adding more choices, not changing the Core but adding more choices that would still fulfill the Core requirements.
Dr. Huerta said that we have been making incremental changes to the Core, which is much different from the original core that was very limited and more focused. He suggested that instead of making incremental changes to the Core, we should decide what we want for the Core. He suggested conferences and retreats that focus on the role of Core programs. It was stated that the core is set up that way because of certain constraints and that everything we do in the Core is exactly how it should be.

Dr. Crowley disagreed with looking at the core and asking what it should be, and said that they needed to look at the classes already in the Core and decide if they meet the criteria. He suggested not cutting segments out of the Core but suggesting other courses that meet the same criteria for the state and the University. He said he’s not suggesting too much choice, he just suggests reviewing the Core and deciding where the flexibility is.

Dr. Carter asked if there are forces out there seeking changes in the Core. Dr. Huerta said that issues came up with the 120 hour rule, but it was easier than expected to reach 120 hours. Dr. Carter restated that there is no pressure and asked about flexibility “where is it? Three more, three less?” and Dr. Huerta stated that we can only have three more Core classes.

Dr. Huerta said that he does not think there will be any significant movement to making changes in the core. He said that they could have a required degree plan with just the minimum required Core classes and a recommended plan that has a larger variety of required Core classes.

3. Discussion about how to handle transfer requests: Dr. Huerta began by saying that substitutions are forbidden. The THECB forbids Core substitutions. He said that problems arise when people are transferring from out of state, unless it is real obvious from the description. He said that each of the representatives will be useful in reading descriptions and helping Pat Hill in deciding if it can be transferred in as a Core class. He said that it is also important to keep in contact with him, Pat Hill, and the student’s advisor. Courses are not substituted, they are transferred.

2:00—Dr. Boatwright, Dr. Joswiak, and Dr. Bala left.

4. Promoting student success:
   a. Identifying barrier courses: A barrier course is one that has a higher rate of students with Ds, Fs, and Ws. We want to identify those so that we can help the students.

   Dr. Hill said that identifying these courses is a way of getting resources. However, problems arise when not enough students are using their resources and these programs get cut. An example was presented of a tutoring program that students did not use and ended up getting canceled.

   Dr. Carter asked if this was really the right title for them. Should it be called barrier courses? Filter course may be a better name for it.
Dr. Crowley said that students have come to him before complaining that tutoring services have been cut, so it is important for the tutoring center to work with them when it comes to barrier courses.

b. 1st year students:

5. Assessment Update: Gale Stuart was not present so the assessment update was not discussed.

6. The 45-Hour Core Curriculum
   a. Advocating for the 45-hour core and undergraduate education
   b. Ideas for developing a 45-hour Core Identity: Dr. Huerta discussed the fact that the core curriculum does not really have anything that cut across it, but people want to work together especially since there are shared interests. Dr. Huerta suggested Core Curriculum T-shirts or a reception to give identity to the Core program.

   Dr. Meyer discussed the idea of having a speaker series that would cut across themes for Core. She suggested having a theme for each semester to incorporate into the classes and include speakers, films, and other things. This would give identity to the Core programs if we had more speakers and events. The issue that was presented was funding for these events.

   Dr. Huerta said that this group is appropriate for coming up with ideas like that because they are the ones that actually teach in the Core. He said that to get money they can work with Student Affairs and the Core Curriculum programs can provide some money. “We can get some money from the Deans and from Ann Degaish”

   Dr. Crowley said that with the new Provost coming in the Resource group needs to be persuasive in getting money and a speaker series. Make sure that we can afford at least two prominent speakers each year that cut across a theme. He said that they need to get support from outside the program and to set themes that can be linked to many courses.

   Dr. Murphy asked if a speaker series was supposed to be part of the PAC and that maybe they can get some budget money from there. She said that we can get some of the fund from the material fees, which frees up some money. However, the material fees may not work because they have to be used for certain things, which may not include a speaker series.

   Dr. Murphy then said that they needed to design a “vision statement” for Core since Core has changed. Dr. Meyer said that they already have statements of Core, but Dr. Crowley said they needed something more general. Dr. Murphy then said that they needed a tighter list since the point of Core is to give students a common experience. She said that the campus needs to commit to either a wide variety of experiences or a common experience.
Dr. Huerta went back to creating a central theme for the Core and Dr. Meyer said that T-shirts are still a good idea but they need a donor. Dr. Huerta described this as a working group and discussed the idea of having a reception for Core faculty. He asked if they need to get the resource group meeting on the agenda before classes even begin and that they need to find a time to meet.

Dr. Crowley said that they need to link the reception with updates about the Core.

Dr. Hill said that they needed to use the speakers as a recruitment tool but that they needed to have incentives for students to go to the speakers.

Dr. Murphy said that they needed to build community with the Core faculty but the reception idea needs to be fun or they need to offer incentives. She discussed the Professional Development lunches A&H has and said that may be a good idea. Instead of having a large lecture lunch, open it up to Core faculty.

Dr. Crowley said that they needed the theme for the speaker series and they needed to figure out how many speakers they would have. Dr. Huerta then asked how they could come with a theme and Dr. Murphy said that could be done electronically through e-mail. Dr. Carter said that they needed to have a broad theme that could be used across disciplines and said that he liked the idea of ‘Globalization’ as a theme.

c. What can the UCCP do to help you and your students?: Dr. Huerta asked what the Core can do for the teachers. He said that if there is a conference that deals with Core curriculum issues or learning community issues then Core will fund them for the trips. If they want to present or just go to a conference they just have to send in a proposal. The most important issue is catering to what the students need.

Dr. Murphy then said that we have a library budget and if there are any books or videos they need that pertain to the Core program to send her the list and UCCP will get them.

Dr. Hill then brought up the issue of retention and asked how students can take 1101 after they failed it the first time. She said that students who failed it in the first semester need to repeat and do better so that we can get them off of probation. Do they have someone to teach the skills needed?

Dr. Murphy said that the seminar classes could teach more study skills in the spring. Dr. Grise asked about the number of students they have that fail these classes and was told that there were 300 students on probation last Spring that needed to repeat these courses.

Dr. Crowley suggested training sessions for Core instructors that have large classes. Dr. Murphy said that they had someone from A&M College Station come and he wasn’t liked. Dr. Crowley suggested that they should get someone from the outside who
is nationally recognized for teaching large classes and someone from inside our University. They discussed organizing an in-house workshop for those who teach large classes.

Dr. Huerta suggested a motion to adjourn. Dr. Crowley made the motion, which was seconded by Dr. Murphy.

Minutes Submitted by:

Minutes Approved by: