



# General Education as a Campus-Wide Collaborative Effort

Jacob M. Held, PhD

University of Central Arkansas



# General Education is Universal Education

- Developing skills, competencies...Intellectual Virtues!
- A good liberal education prepares students to be successful in their careers as well as engaged, responsible members of their communities.
- “A liberal education helps you achieve broad knowledge and a set of skills and capacities that you need for all kinds of careers and for the rest of your life as well.” (from Robert Schoenberg, What Will I Learn in College?, 6)





# All Students, Most Faculty

- All undergraduate students go through our general education program.
- Most faculty engage with, teach in, or are otherwise vested in the general education program.
- All faculty deal with the outcome of the general education program.
- The whole campus is involved.
- The whole campus is vested in the success of general education.





- A Brief Summary of General Education at the University of Central Arkansas (UCA)
- A Brief Summary of Assessment of General Education at UCA
- General Education in Practice: Improvement and Collaboration Across Campus



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Part I:

General Education at the University of Central Arkansas

The UCA Core



# The UCA Core

- The UCA Core is a comprehensive academic program of study designed to develop and reinforce students' knowledge and skills of *critical inquiry* and *effective communication*, as well as the knowledge and skills necessary for living *responsible, ethical* lives in a *diverse* and changing world.
- The overarching goal of the program is to facilitate the development of thoughtful, knowledgeable, articulate, and ethical citizens.





# Plato's Allegory of the Cave



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# The UCA Core Basic Structure

The UCA Core is a comprehensive course of study comprised of a lower (LD) and upper (UD) core curriculum, and carried through the student's entire undergraduate career. The Core introduces, develops, and applies fundamental competencies around four knowledge and skill areas:

**Critical Inquiry (I)** – The ability to analyze new problems and situations to formulate informed opinions and conclusions;

**Effective Communication (C)** – The ability to develop and present ideas logically and effectively in order to enhance communication and collaboration with diverse individuals and groups;

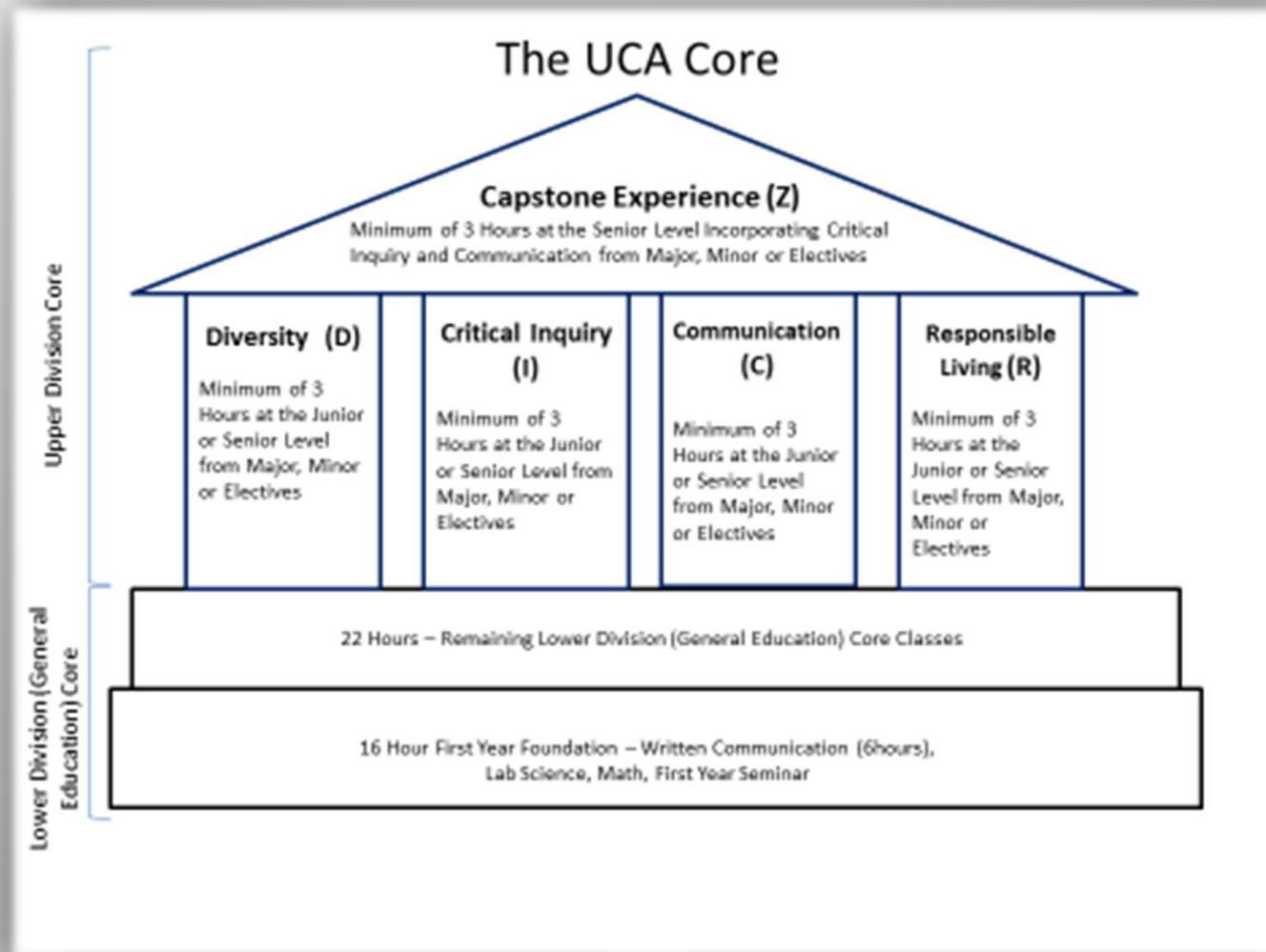
**Responsible Living (R)** – The ability to address real-world problems and find ethical solutions for individuals and society;

**Diversity (D)** – The ability to analyze familiar cultural assumptions in the context of the world's diverse values, traditions, and belief systems as well as to analyze the major ideas, techniques, and processes that inform creative works within different cultural and historical contexts.



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# General Education needs to be Assessable

- We value Gen Ed because we value the outcome; informed, engaged citizens.
- We should be able to articulate those student learning outcomes in terms of a coherent pedagogical theory and practice.
- We should be able to articulate how we promote these practices, how we improve, and thereby what added value our students receive from our programming.
- We need to make informed decisions about best practices and improve based on relevant information, namely, student performance.





# Against the Sophists



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Part II:  
Assessment



# The Goal of Assessment

- 1) Assure integrity in the UCA Core as an academic program
- 2) Verify that best practices are being used consistently across campus
- 3) Optimize student learning across the 4 competencies at both the Lower and Upper Division
- 4) Identify areas for improvement and design and implement improvement measures





# Assessment in Practice

- Assessing a general education program is like assessing a major, or any other academic program...just bigger...much, much bigger!
- The Basics:
  - Curriculum: Course design, course offerings, and delivery
  - Faculty: Trained in rubrics and outcomes, and offered development opportunities.
  - Assignments: Design, choice, and collection (Infrastructure is necessary!)
  - The Data: Scoring, Reporting, Using!







# The Assessment Cycle

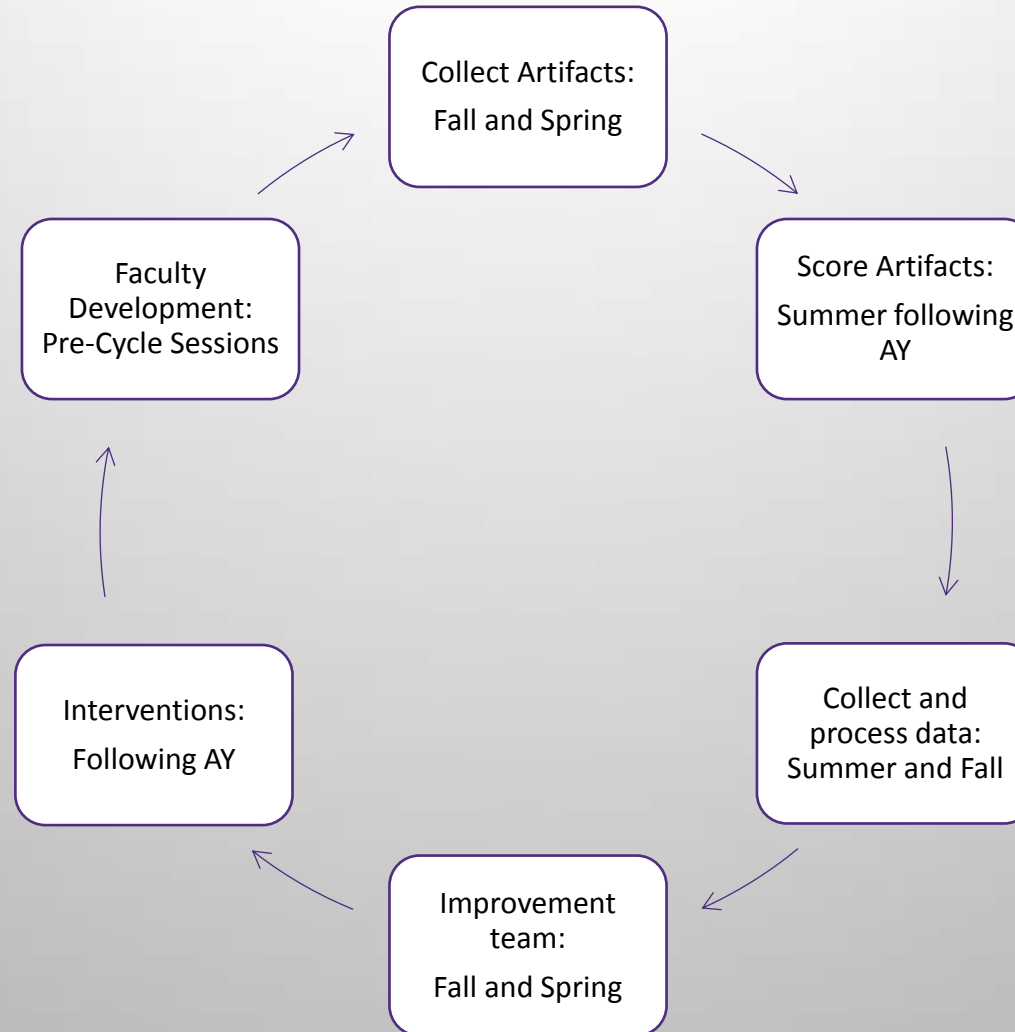
- Assessment of the UCA Core proceeds on a 4 year cycle.
- Each year a single competency, with all its associated goals, is assessed.
- The first four year cycle provides initial data. A second four cycle provides an additional data set. A full programmatic assessment is recommended after 10 years.

Academic Year	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21
Assess	RL	D	C	CI	RL
Evaluate		RL	D	C	CI
Train			RL	D	C
Implement				RL	D





# The Assessment Process in Practice





# Pre-Cycle Training

Spring before the Assessment year. Offer sessions facilitated by content experts on:

1. Curriculum design
2. Assignment design
3. Assignment choice and placement
4. The assessment process itself
5. Rubric interpretation





# Artifact Scoring

The summer after all artifacts have been collected:

1. Recruit a team of scorers from faculty area experts across campus (Reimbursed at \$250.00 per day (3 day commitment))
2. Meet late summer with scoring team
  - Calibrate the team using anchor samples
  - Provide each scorer with AQUA profile
  - Score, score, score





# Example: Diversity Scoring

- Evaluation of the artifacts took place August 2018. The evaluation team included:

## Rubric A (Own)

- **Riva Brown**, Assistant Professor, School of Communication
- **Yuen Chan**, Assistant Professor, Marketing and Management
- **John Gale**, Associate Professor, Film, Theatre, and Creative Writing

## Rubric B (Other)

- **John Parrack**, Professor, Language, Linguistics, Literatures & Cultures
- **Zachary Smith**, Assistant Professor, History
- **Thomas Snyder**, Associate Professor, Economics, Finance, and Insurance & Risk Management

## Rubric C (Creative Works)

- **Gilbert Baker**, Assistant Professor, Music
- **Sonya Fritz**, Associate Professor, English
- **Kyle Mattson**, Associate Professor, School of Communication
- **Stephanie Vanderslice**, Professor, Film, Theatre, and Creative Writing





# Using the Data: Reporting Out

- Campus wide sessions
- Get it to departments and colleges
- Consultations
- Tie it into daily practices/Show its relevance and benefit







# Using the Data: Follow up Sessions

## Faculty Development

- Identify the top performers for each goals.
- Contact faculty and work in consultation to develop programming.
- We can learn a great deal from each other. We need to leverage our best practices for our students' benefit.
- UCA Core programming. Sessions to promote/discuss:
  - Rubrics, assessment, and student learning
  - Assignment design and selection
  - Best practices on campus





# Faculty and Assessment

- We already do this: Anytime we give, grade, and rework an assignment we're "closing the loop on an assessment cycle."
- Faculty need to see added value in the classroom.
- They need to be a part of it.





Part III:  
Improvement and Collaboration



# Deliberation: The UCA Core Council

- A Curricular Senate
  - Three representatives from each college, as well as at-large reps.
  - Reviews assessment processes and results
  - Reviews the full curriculum
  - Reviews improvement measures
  - Reports out annually, in various fora, for various audiences/stakeholders





# The Goal is Student Learning

- The goal of the UCA Core is to provide a ***common, foundational educational experience*** to all UCA undergraduate students. We chose these outcomes as the ***essential skills*** all UCA students should develop.
- We can only achieve this goal if we continuously evaluate the UCA Core curriculum and ***assess it for programmatic cohesion and effectiveness***. Assessment is crucial for improvement!
- We all must do our bona fide best in our respective roles to provide our students the best education possible at UCA.
- Remember: **This is about the students!**





# Standards and Shared Understanding

- The UCA Core handbook: Standards, Procedures, Policies
- The Core Curriculum
  - The Core is a developmental program, progressing from the introduction of skills and concepts to reinforcement, and ultimately mastery. It is paramount that LD and UD Core courses be placed intentionally throughout a student's programmatic curriculum.
  - Review all degree programs with regard to LD and UD Core offerings. Make curricular recommendations to reflect the nature of the UCA Core as a scaffolded program.







# Core Curriculum: LD Core Review

- Committee requests info, reviews, send to full Council.
- Council reviews the recommendation
- For courses that have been reviewed and found to be deficient:
  - Speak to department chairs, department and college curriculum committees, and individual faculty as relevant
  - Recommendations
    - Revise curriculum of course to be consistent with UCA Core standards and outcomes
    - Remove course if revisions are rejected
- The key is transparency and faculty involvement.
- The goal is to use the assessment process to improve the Core curriculum and offer students the educational experience we say we offer and that they deserve.





# Results to date

Responsible Living LD Core Audit (AY 2018-2019)					
Course Number	Course Name	Reviewed (Date)	Determination	Core Council Decision	Further Action
ACAD 1300	Journeys to Success	Fall 2018	Meets Standards	Concurs	None required (See report)
BUAD 2303	Business Travel Seminar	Spring 2019	Failed to Meet Standards	Concurs	Assurance argument required (Due July 1, 2019)
COMM 1306	Communication and Civic Engage	Spring 2019	Clarification required	Concurs	Clarification (July 1, 2019)
ECON 1310	Modern Political Economy	Spring 2019	Meets Standards	Concurs	None required (See report)
EDUC 2310	Mentoring for Growth	N/A	N/A	N/A	Mentor program on hiatus
EDUC 2330	Topics in Justice in Teaching...	Admitted to the UCA LD Core as responsible living recently so no review is necessary			
ENGL 1345	Intro to Lit and Social Resp.	Admitted to the UCA LD Core as responsible living recently so no review is necessary			
ENGR 1301	Intro to Engineering	Spring 2019	Failed to Meet Standards	Concurs	Assurance argument required (Due July 1, 2019)
EXSS 1320	Foundations of Wellness	Fall 2018	Meets Standards	Concurs	None required (See report)
FACS 2341	Lifespan Development	Fall 2018	Meets Standards	Concurs	None required (See report)
FACS 2351	Family Relations	Spring 2019	Meets Standards	Concurs	None required (See report)
FINA 2330	Personal Finance	Fall 2018	Failed to Meet Standards	Concurs	Assurance argument required (Due Spring 2019)
H_ED 2320	Mental Health	Spring 2019	Clarification required	Concurs	Clarification (July 1, 2019)
HIST 1376	FYS: Hist Persp on Resp. Living	Admitted to the UCA LD Core as responsible living recently so no review is necessary			
HONC 1320	Honors Core II	Spring 2019	Meets Standards	Concurs	None required (See report)
HONC 2310	Honors Core III	Spring 2019	Failed to Meet Standards	Concurs	Assurance argument required (Due July 1, 2019)
MCOM 1300	Media and Society	Spring 2019	Failed to Meet Standards	Concurs	Assurance argument required (Due July 1, 2019)
NUTR 1300	Foundations of Nutrition	Spring 2019	Meets Standards	Concurs	None required (See report)
PHIL 2325	Contemporary Moral Problems	Fall 2018	Meets Standards	Concurs	None required (See report)
PHIL 2360	Gender, Race, and Class	Spring 2019	Failed to Meet Standards	Concurs	Assurance argument required (Due July 1, 2019)
PSCI 2315	Intro to Political Theory	Spring 2019	Meets Standards	Concurs	None required (See report)
SOC 2325	Social Problems	Spring 2019	Clarification required	Concurs	Clarification (July 1, 2019)
USCH 1300	On Expertise	Fall 2018	Meets Standards	Concurs	Being revised for non RL issues
WRTG 2325	Intro to Rhetoric	Spring 2019	Failed to Meet Standards	Concurs	Assurance argument required (Due July 1, 2019)





# Core Curriculum: UD Core Review

- The Upper Division Core is mostly present in a student's major
- Two issues are accessibility and alignment to Core goals.
- Work with departments to best resolve these issues.
- With respect to accessibility:
  - Does the major offer a full complement of UD Core courses?
    - If so, will a student necessarily complete the UD Core in her major?
      - If not, why not? Can the curriculum be so arranged?
  - If not:
    - Can it offer a full complement of UD Core courses?
    - If it can not or will not, then is there an academic map so a student knows where to get all her required UD Core courses if not in her major?





# Conversations

- Assessment is about intentional, self-reflection.
- Need to be honest and open.
- There is no emergency!
- Compromise

"Wait till you are absolutely sure of success, acknowledge nothing if its truth has not been ascertained, and all action will be abandoned, life will come to a standstill." - Seneca





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# Contact Information

Jacob Held, PhD

Director of the UCA Core

Professor of Philosophy

University of Central Arkansas

501-450-5307

[jmhheld@uca.edu](mailto:jmhheld@uca.edu)



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