Catamount Core Curriculum Committee (CCCC) Report to the UVM Faculty Senate
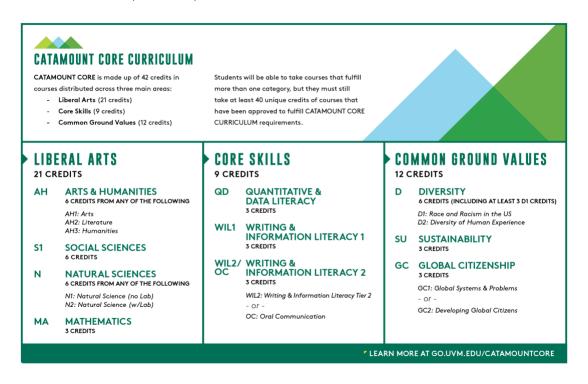*4/24/24*
This report summarizes the work of the Catamount Core Curriculum Committee (CCCC), a joint committee of the Faculty Senate and Provost's Office, during the 2022-23 and 2023-24 academic years.

1. A Brief History of the CCCC and General Education at UVM

Spring, 2019: At the time of UVM's 2019 reaccreditation with the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE), the general education program consisted of 15 credits of university-level requirements, supplemented by another 30+ credits of distribution requirements at the college level. In advance of the accreditation process, UVM conducted a self-study that affirmed its intention to develop a university-wide general education program; NECHE's accreditation letter noted the urgency of this action, requesting an update on its development and successful implementation by the time of our 2024 interim report.

2019-2020: The Provost's Office initiated a program to develop, implement, and coordinate a campus-wide undergraduate general education curriculum, one that aligned UVM's unique mission with NECHE standards, consisting of 40+ credits spread across multiple categories. Faculty participated in this General Education Alignment program in a variety of capacities, from serving on the task force to proposing new Gen Ed requirements and serving on the ad hoc committees that developed descriptions and learning outcomes for each category.

2020-2021: The Faculty Senate voted to approve the basic structure of the Catamount Core, as well as the specific description and required learning outcomes for each designation. The new Catamount Core Curriculum retains several university-level "legacy" requirements and adds several new designations, comprising 42 credits across three main categories: Liberal Arts (21 credits), Core Skills (9 credits) and Common Ground Values (12 credits).

CATAMOUNT CORE CURRICULUM

CATAMOUNT CORE is made up of 42 credits in courses distributed across three main areas:
- **Liberal Arts** (21 credits)
- **Core Skills** (9 credits)
- **Common Ground Values** (12 credits)

Students will be able to take courses that fulfill more than one category, but they must still take at least 40 unique credits of courses that have been approved to fulfill CATAMOUNT CORE CURRICULUM requirements.

LIBERAL ARTS
21 CREDITS

AH — ARTS & HUMANITIES
6 CREDITS FROM ANY OF THE FOLLOWING
AH1: Arts
AH2: Literature
AH3: Humanities

S1 — SOCIAL SCIENCES
6 CREDITS

N — NATURAL SCIENCES
6 CREDITS FROM ANY OF THE FOLLOWING
N1: Natural Science (no Lab)
N2: Natural Science (w/Lab)

MA — MATHEMATICS
3 CREDITS

CORE SKILLS
9 CREDITS

QD — QUANTITATIVE & DATA LITERACY
3 CREDITS

WIL1 — WRITING & INFORMATION LITERACY 1
3 CREDITS

WIL2/ OC — WRITING & INFORMATION LITERACY 2
3 CREDITS
WIL2: Writing & Information Literacy Tier 2
- or -
OC: Oral Communication

COMMON GROUND VALUES
12 CREDITS

D — DIVERSITY
6 CREDITS (INCLUDING AT LEAST 3 D1 CREDITS)
D1: Race and Racism in the US
D2: Diversity of Human Experience

SU — SUSTAINABILITY
3 CREDITS

GC — GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP
3 CREDITS
GC1: Global Systems & Problems
- or -
GC2: Developing Global Citizens

LEARN MORE AT GO.UVM.EDU/CATAMOUNTCORE

The distributed nature of the Catamount Core Curriculum means that students have the option of choosing among categories and courses. In addition, a single course is permitted to hold up to three designations, so students can fulfill all general education requirements in fewer than 42 credits (though they are required to take 40 credits of courses approved within the CCC).

2021-2022: The Catamount Core Curriculum Committee was created as an ad-hoc joint committee of the Office of the Provost and the Faculty Senate, charged with creating the structures and processes necessary for implementing the new CCC. Membership in this first iteration of the CCCC was half elected by the Faculty Senate, with representation from every college, and half appointed by the Provost's Office, to ensure continuity with earlier general education efforts as well as expertise across the newly created designations. Over the course of their first year, CCCC developed a process for submission and evaluation, creating rubrics appropriate to each designation, and developing a 3-person subcommittee structure for review of each submission.

As noted in the 2022 report to the Faculty Senate by Pablo Bose, inaugural Chair of the CCCC, the new committee was tasked with "two simultaneous (and significant) mandates": bringing several "legacy" requirements (particularly the "Common Ground Values" designations D1, D2, and SU) into alignment with the broader structure of the CCC, and simultaneously developing the administrative and technical procedures by which the full roster of courses representing the Catamount Core Curriculum would take shape.

During the first year of CCCC, nearly 150 new courses were submitted for approval; as newly created designations encountered courses from across the university for the first time, the committee worked collaboratively to tweak requirements in several categories in order to include a broader range of courses offered across disciplines at UVM. Then as now, the committee's primary aim has been to open flexible new pathways and learning experiences for students as they complete their General Education requirements; meeting this goal has therefore entailed finding areas of compromise, such that neither the new CCC framework nor the existing curriculum must contort themselves to fit one another.

2. **2022-2023 Academic Year**

Submission and Review Processes:
By the CCCC's second year, the application, submission, and review processes were largely in place, though we have continued to refine various systems in response to feedback from faculty, review committees, and other participants. This section of the report will provide an overview of Committee operations and activity; for a more detailed description of Committee policies, see Appendix A for a link to the "Policy Guidance, Processes and Procedures" drafted by Pablo Bose and John Sama and submitted to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee for review in Fall 2023.

The Catamount Core application process requires that faculty indicate how course activities will address each of the required learning outcomes associated with the designation they are applying for, as well as demonstrate how student achievement of these outcomes will be assessed. Full instructions for application and submission of course proposals can be found on the General Education site, along with approval criteria, required learning outcomes, and links to CAF supplements for all Catamount Core designations: Approval Criteria and Learning Outcomes for all Catamount Core Designations

Faculty submit proposals for Catamount Core designations through UVM's Courseleaf system, where it follows the workflow established for the specific college or school before reaching our committee for review:

- Step 1: Instructor uploads current (or proposed) syllabus and completed supplemental action form to CourseLeaf
- Step 2: Course is approved by department chair/program director
- Step 3: Course is approved by college curriculum committee
- Step 4: Course is approved by CCCC
- Step 5: Course is approved by Provost's Office
- Step 6: Registrar's Office updates course attributes in Banner for use in SOC, Catalogue, degree audit, etc.

In terms of Step 4, Administrator John Sama receives and organizes materials submitted via CourseLeaf; a few weeks before each monthly CCCC meeting, he then distributes these materials among the CCCC's 3-person review subcommittees. For the first two years, subcommittees were comprised of faculty with particular disciplinary expertise or background (so Humanities submissions, for example, would be reviewed by other faculty members who teach AH courses). In the years leading up to implementation of the Catamount Core, this practice allowed for informed tweaks and revisions of the categories, as needed, to reflect the work and course offerings across UVM's curricula; in its most recent iteration, the subcommittees have been more diversified, as detailed below.

When subcommittees are assigned a proposal to review, members assess the course syllabus and supplemental form against the evaluation rubric to ensure that it meets all requirements for the requested designation(s). Reviewers leave feedback on a collaborative review form, along with a recommendation to approve, "roll back" the course for revision, or deny the designation. Once at least two members of the subcommittee have reached agreement on an assigned course, an approval decision is made; in the case of a split decision or disagreement, additional reviewers are brought in. Courses receive one of the following decisions:

- **"Approve"**: approved designations last for five years, after which the instructor will apply to the committee for renewal;
- **"Roll back"**: if a course needs revision, the Chair will communicate the reviewing subcommittee's feedback to the instructor, along with specific recommendations for revision. A course might be rolled back if, for example, it effectively demonstrates only three of four required learning outcomes for a given designation, or if the subcommittee needs additional detail about assigned readings in order to determine whether the course meets the mandatory "75% threshold" required for D1 or D2 approval. The instructor is invited to revise and resubmit the syllabus and supplement for CCCC review.

An archive of all submitted course syllabi and supplemental forms has been created by CCCC staff (our administrator John Sama). All courses approved in advance of the launch of CCC in Fall 2023 are valid as of 2023-2028. The archive should facilitate an efficient renewal process, as instructors will be able to review (and adapt, if necessary) previous submission materials before applying to extend their CCC designation(s).

Summary of CCCC Review Activity (2022-2023 Academic Year):

Course Actions Processed

- Total Number of Requests Received: **792**
- Total Number of Approvals: **726**
- Total Rolled Back: **26**
- Closed/Other: **40**

Transfer Requests Processed

- Received: **109**
- Approved: **71**
- Denied: **27**
- Closed/Other: **11**

3. 2023-2024 Academic Year

The Catamount Core Curriculum was implemented in the fall semester of 2023, on schedule to provide NECHE with its requested update on the general education program in our 2024 interim report. With policies largely in place for course approval, the committee continued to process a large volume of courses from across the university during this first year of implementation, while turning attention to broader issues related to the next stages of general education and the CCCC:

Transition to a Standing Committee of the Faculty Senate: At the time of its formation in 2021, the Catamount Core Curriculum Committee was envisioned as a temporary collaboration between UVM's Faculty Senate and Provost's Office, whose transition from joint- to standing committee would take place by Fall 2024. Through December 2023, the committee was chaired by the Provost's Faculty Fellow for the Catamount Core Pablo Bose and administered by John Sama, from the Office of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Student Success. Although the Chairship is no longer filled by a Faculty Fellow of the Provost's Office, the committee continues to benefit from the invaluable administrative support of the Provost's Office.

In Spring 2024, Senate President Tom Borchert convened a series of meetings with a small group of curricular leaders at UVM (including current CCCC staff, members, and Chair; Curriculum Committee Chairs from several units; and members of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, including Co-Chairs of the CAC and President) to discuss the potential structure of the Committee going forward. Committee members emphasized the importance of retaining faculty control over the Catamount Core curricular content and review mechanisms, while retaining the support of the Provost's Office—in particular the administrative staff, without whom the work of the CCCC would not be possible. The group discussed various structural possibilities (continued joint committee, sub-committee of the CAC, or independent standing committee of Faculty Senate), taking into account factors such as the expected structure, membership, and charge of the CCCC; the committee's technical and administrative demands (including reporting structures & workload concerns); NECHE's call for due diligence in regards to curricular matters; and UVM's broader curricular ecosystem. The group ultimately concluded that CCCC would function most effectively as a standing committee of the Faculty Senate, setting the goal of completing the transition in time for approval by the Board of Trustees at their February, 2025 meeting. This timeline entails a change in Senate by-laws and draft charge by the end of this year, followed by approval by the Faculty Senate in Fall 2024; the new committee structure will be reviewed after five years.

Committee membership and workload: the loss over time of several long-standing members of the committee and its earlier iterations prompted a revised review process, whereby members of the CCCC now review requests across all CCC designations (rather than within their particular area of expertise). The shift has obliged committee members to familiarize themselves with approval criteria across the full Catamount Core for monthly review commitments; meanwhile, the decrease in membership overall has led to a commensurate increase in the monthly review burden.

As a joint committee, membership was initially divided between those faculty elected from each college and those selected to represent a specific curricular area. Following its transition to a standing committee, the Faculty Senate will need to take up the question of committee constitution, in order to

maintain membership across units while ensuring representation from specific disciplinary or curricular specialization. One possibility, which grew out of the CCCC transition discussions outlined above, would be to hold elections for proportional representation from each unit, then solicit/appoint additional, discipline-specific representatives to fill out the committee, based upon its assessed needs after elections. For example, if elected membership does not include faculty with expertise in content areas related to D1 or SU, effort would be made to appoint members who might represent those designations (or combinations of designations, such as MA + QD) on CCCC.

Fine-tuning Section Approval Processes:
Over the course of the 2022-2023 academic year, in preparation for full implementation of the CCC, the committee focused particular attention on soliciting and approving introductory-level courses across designations for incoming first-year and transfer students. In particular, the enormity of the initiative to approve enough First-Year Seminars (including offerings in PLHC and LASP) to accommodate the large incoming class of 2027 necessitated the arrangement of several MOUs covering the "legacy" categories (FWIL, D1, D2, SU, and QR) typically fulfilled by these courses. As former Chair Pablo Bose summarized in the Policy Guidance document he provided the Senate Executive Committee in Fall 2023, "The sheer number of First Year Seminars and the need to accommodate both a transition to four digit renumbering and the change from the TAP program to the FYS program has meant the need for a one-year exemption (for 2023-2024 only) for these courses." According to this agreement, courses that had previously been approved for the FWIL designation were given temporary WIL1 status for the inaugural year of CCC, with the understanding that instructors would need to submit full WIL1 applications the following year (in order to gain the full 5-year approval for the designation). The transition from MOU agreement to regular approval process for these first-year seminars (which might be offered on a rotating rather than regular basis, and which are typically offered as individual "sections" of a parent "Topics in" course) took place over the course of the 2023-2024 academic year. The process revealed several unanticipated implementation challenges, mainly related to the incompatibility between CCCC deadlines (which are tied to the academic calendar and the SoC & catalogue deadlines of the Registrar's Office) and customary departmental timelines (where faculty might not know their teaching assignments until the new CCCC deadline is imminent) as well as hiring processes (whereby new faculty teaching new courses would be required to submit syllabi well prior to their onboarding date). The resulting complications required significant additional work on the part of both faculty in affected programs and our Committee, as well as support from the Registrar's Office. Thus, a major priority of the coming year will be working to minimize these challenges while still maintaining the integrity of the CCC designations.

Other initiatives and changes over the past academic year include:
- Implementation of the CCCC **Transfer Request Review Process**, in coordination with the Office of Transfer Affairs;
- **Increased student outreach**, including professional advising and ASV days, as well as our student representative Mar Wiltz's "CCCC takeover" of the UVM Instagram page in advance of course registration for Fall 2024;
- **Transfer of Committee Chairship** following Pablo Bose's departure from the position in December, 2023;
- Working with the new **University Assessment Coordinator** to implement the first year of the CCC assessment cycle.

Summary of CCCC Review Activity (2023-2024 Academic Year, thru April 15)

<u>**Course Actions Processed**</u>

- Total Number of Requests Received: 706
- Total Number of Approvals: 583
- Total Rolled Back: 43
- Closed/Other: 35

Transfer Requests Processed
- Received: 61
- Approved: 34
- Denied: 21
- Closed/Other: 3
- Still Open/Pending: 3

Current Count of Courses & Sections approved for Catamount Core Designation

Attribute	Course Count
AH1	136
AH2	118
AH3	137
D1	98
D2	177
GC1	41
GC2	119
MA	19
N1	59
N2	55
OC	55
QD	52
S1	147
SU	117
WIL1	147
WIL2	61
	1538*

*Notes:
- Courses that carry multiple designations are counted multiple times in this data, so the overall number of <u>unique</u> courses that carry one or more CCC designations is actually lower than the total indicated above. Our best calculation is that there are 1,005 unique courses/sections that carry at least one CCC designation.

Capacity in CCC Courses

Two years ago, the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) created a dashboard to track the capacity in all CCC courses. The dashboard enables the Committee to track whether enough spots are available for students within the CCC categories, and allows users to break down results by

college/school and individual course. Due to this granularity of data, the dashboard is not currently available to all campus users. The dashboard is updated each semester after the end of the add/drop period. Data from this year show that there are more than enough spots available each semester to students across the curriculum, including areas like D1. As more classes switch over to the new curriculum, the committee will continue to track capacity in CCC designated courses.

Overall, usage of available CCC designated courses is high, with all areas at over 75% capacity. One area that stands out as having less capacity than expected is the N1, Natural Sciences without lab category, with 96% utilization this Spring, and 93% utilization over the current academic year. N2, Natural sciences with lab, also had a high utilization rate, over 90% for the academic year. It is difficult to say whether the rollout of the CCC six-credit Natural Sciences requirements this year contributed to existing enrollment pressures in Natural Sciences courses, but additional N1 courses in particular might alleviate these pressures.

D1, D2 and SU courses, while consistently at 88 or 89% capacity usage overall, do allow students enough capacity to enroll. Enrollment utilization in these courses especially varies across colleges, with some courses overenrolled and others under-enrolled. Where possible, helping students search for available courses in these areas with the new Schedule of Courses search feature would support usage of available capacity in these courses. Other areas with high usage, such as MA and WIL1 likely reflect management of enrollment to meet requirements.

Assessment of Catamount Core Learning Outcomes

Since the creation of the committee, an assessment representative from the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) has consulted with the committee on assessment plans. During the first two years of the committee, this representative was Anil Lalwani, whose position as a Postdoctoral Fellow for Gen Ed Assessment was paid for by a Davis Educational Foundation institutional grant. Dr. Lalwani developed an initial four-year assessment cycle, which plans out 3 to 4 Catamount Core outcomes to be assessed each year. In addition, he created a survey to collect faculty perceptions of student learning in the Gen Ed categories that were moved over to the new curriculum (D1, D2, SU, FWIL/WIL). Beginning this fall, Rich Cohen, the new University Assessment Coordinator, has worked with the committee to implement the first year of the assessment cycle in consultation with faculty and committee members whose teaching focuses on the outcomes to be assessed this year: D2, MA, S1, and WIL2.

The goal of the OIRA/CCCC collaboration is to foreground faculty knowledge of the curriculum and teaching practice, while alleviating the committee of the work of organizing and managing assessment of student learning within the Catamount Core. In preparation for the assessment of the four outcomes slated for assessment this year, Dr. Cohen worked with members of the CCCC with different areas of expertise to develop assessment protocols. These protocols largely emphasize direct assessment of student work through the application of a rubric scaled to the specific outcomes of the gen ed category to examples of student work collected by faculty and sent to OIRA. Outreach to faculty inviting their involvement emphasized that data collection and the rating process focus on student learning across all courses utilizing anonymized samples processed by OIRA into randomized sets and then rated by faculty in a rubric. No individual course, faculty member, or student will be identified or evaluated in this process. The protocols are as follows:
- **MA** – Members Joan Rosebush and Joe Kudrle helped plan an assessment protocol that will allow faculty to utilize their efforts grading problem sets and exams to provide direct assessment data to OIRA regarding students' achievement of MA outcomes.

- **WIL2** – Susanmarie Harrington, committee member and director of WID and CTL, worked with Rich Cohen to develop a faculty communication and invitation to submit work for a direct assessment event in May. WIL2 faculty are also invited to participate in this assessment day, which will focus not only on considering student achievement of the WIL2 outcomes, but also offer an opportunity for faculty to discuss faculty development needs for those planning and teaching WIL2 courses.
- **S1** – Rich Cohen and ex-officio member J. Dickinson based the S1 protocol on the WIL2 protocol, with assessment of this learning outcome set to take place in August during a compensated off-contract rating day.
- **D2** - With several semesters of survey data from faculty speaking to their perceptions of student achievement of D2 outcomes, a facilitated meeting of faculty teaching D2 courses to discuss the requirement, current outcomes, and review collected data was chosen to open a discussion on this outcome within the context of this new curriculum.

CCCC Goals and Priorities for 2024-2025

1. **Improving communication with colleges/departments/programs/faculty**
   - Early communication with chairs/directors about CCCC submission deadlines and expectations, resources, and meeting dates, so that faculty won't be caught off guard (and programs can shift toward earlier teaching assignments to align with CCC review dates, which are tied to the Registrar's SoC and Catalogue deadlines);
   - Collaborate with CTL/WID to host workshops per semester, timed to coincide with CCC/RO deadlines.

2. **Reflecting on our own processes & mechanisms**
   - Continue to improve policies, procedures, and communication about expectations as much as possible in response to feedback from faculty, administrative staff, and committee members. We will continue to refine our application and assessment materials (CAF supplements, assessment and transfer request forms), as well as our guidelines for faculty (and transfer students) requesting course designations. One major priority in the coming year will be to work with Colleges, Programs, and Registrar's Office to establish measures to help mediate the conflicts that arose this year between the needs of the Committee (to protect the integrity of the Catamount Core, and to review and approve courses on a schedule compatible with broader university operations) and those of faculty creating or assigned to teach new courses;
   - Improved website with a section for instructors, which would include the approval criteria & learning outcomes for each designation, along with links to CAF supplements, "helpful hints" for applicants, and sample materials;
   - Drafting a set of clear guidelines for new committee members. With a big turnover this coming fall (and with it, a loss of institutional memory about many of the designations), lots of new reviewers will need onboarding.

Appendices

Appendix A: ["Policy Guidance, Processes and Procedures," submitted for Faculty Senate review and feedback in Fall 2023](#)

Appendix B: AY 23-24 Catamount Core Curriculum Committee Roster

Name	Department	UnitID	AppointedOrElected
Benson, Daisy	Howe Library	LIB	Libraries Elected Rep
Cohen, Rich	Ofc of Inst'l Rsch&Assessment	OIRA	OIRA Representative
Danks, Cecilia	Rubenstein School Env & Nat Res	RSENR	RESNR Elected Rep
deRosset, Louis	Philosophy	CAS	Faculty Senate Exec Council Rep
Dickinson, Jennifer	VP Acad Affairs & Stu Success	VPAASS	Ex Officio, CCCC Convener, VP Acad Affairs & Stu Succ
Ginger, Clare	Rubenstein School Env & Nat Res	RSENR	FS/PO Joint Appointment, Diversity 2
Grimmer, Ian	Honors College	HCOL	HCOL Elected Rep
Haines, Shana	Education	CESS	CESS Elected Rep
Harrington, Susanmarie	English	CAS	FS/PO Joint Appointment, Writing & Info Literacy
Hurley, Stephanie	Plant & Soil Science	CALS	CALS Elected Rep (INTERIM - Spring 2024)
Kudrle, Joseph	Mathematics & Statistics	CEMS	CEMS Elected Rep
Levine-West, Bridget	German & Russian	CAS	CAS Elected Rep
Lowensohn, Suzanne	Grossman School of Business	GSB	GSB Elected Rep
Massell, David	History	CAS	FS/PO Joint Appointment, Humanities
Munkres, Susan	Community-Engaged Learning Office	CELO	CELO Director, Service-Learning Courses
Phelps, Nicole	History	CAS	FS/PO Joint Appointment, Oral Communication
Porter, Tiera	Faculty Senate	FACSEN	Support Staff, Faculty Senate
Rosebush, Joan	Mathematics & Statistics	CEMS	FS/PO Joint Appointment, Mathematics
Sama, John	VP Acad Affairs & Stu Success	VPAASS	Support Staff, VPAASS, CCCC Admin Coordinator
Scollins, Kathleen	German & Russian	CAS	Committee Chair, FS/PO Joint Appointment, Arts
Sibold, Jeremy	CNHS Dean's Office	CNHS	CNHS Elected Rep
Strickler, Jennifer	Sociology	CAS	FS/PO Joint Appointment, Social Sciences
Wiltz, Mar	Undergraduate Student	STU	Undergraduate Student Representative