

The Wright State Core: A Proposal

The mission of the Wright State Core is to provide students with innovative and dynamic opportunities designed to engage learners in becoming active, conscientious, educated citizens of a diverse world.

The Wright State Core is an integrated program of courses and experiences that provides students with the breadth of skills, knowledge and understanding expected of university graduates. A university degree goes beyond preparing graduates for a profession; it transforms their lives and their communities. The Wright State Core helps students develop the knowledge and skills essential for critical thinking, creative problem solving, meaningful civic engagement, multicultural competence, appreciation for the arts, and life-long learning. Wright State graduates will have the ability to apply insights from multiple disciplines to engage effectively with a diverse world.

University Learning Objectives

Wright State graduates will be able to:

1. communicate effectively
2. demonstrate mathematical literacy
3. evaluate arguments and evidence critically
4. apply the methods of inquiry of the natural sciences, social sciences, and the arts and humanities
5. demonstrate global and multicultural competence
6. demonstrate understanding of contemporary social and ethical issues
7. participate in democratic society as informed and civically engaged citizens

The Elements of the Wright State Core: Foundations

The Elements of the Wright State Core are the foundational skills, the broad areas of knowledge and practice, and the global, historical, and cultural perspectives that together will provide Wright State University students with the ability to negotiate their roles successfully and constructively in a changing world. Even more than in the past, graduates must be proficient writers, must be mathematically literate, and must understand the methods of inquiry of the historian, the scientist, and the humanist.

The Elements of the Wright State Core: Innovations

The Wright State Core proposes to expand upon the strengths of the current General Education program with increased emphasis in global studies, in multicultural competence, in digital literacy, in diversity education, and in community-based learning. The Wright State Core encourages faculty to collaborate in developing themed clusters of classes, allowing students to experience the ways different disciplines will approach broad subjects. The Wright State Core is open to interdisciplinary offerings that will encourage students and faculty to think across traditional boundaries. The Wright State Core goes beyond students' first two semesters at a university: it encourages them to grow as writers and learners by integrating some classes into their studies after the first year. And the Wright

49 State Core proposes to permit students to meet certain learning objectives with
50 undergraduate research opportunities, study abroad and internships.

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52 Recommended Innovations

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54 **A. Multicultural Competence:** Today's university graduate must possess multicultural
55 competence, including the skills to be able to engage in an informed way with diverse
56 peoples, cultures, and histories. Developing such skills requires exposure to, knowledge
57 of, and appreciation for cultural, economic, social, and racial diversities within the United
58 States and throughout the world. Therefore, the Wright State Core will require that all
59 students complete at least two approved Core courses that have been designated as
60 containing a significant component of diversity or multicultural competence. Courses from
61 any Element of the Wright State Core may be identified for this designation. Typically,
62 students will meet the requirement with the following courses:

- 63 1) One multicultural course will normally be the interdisciplinary Global Studies course
64 taken in Element 3.
- 65 2) A second multicultural course may be one of the following:
- 66 a. A second interdisciplinary Global Studies course
- 67 b. An approved Wright State Core diversity course from a list of those available
- 68 c. An approved Wright State Core course requiring study abroad (e.g. an
69 Ambassador course)
- 70 d. An approved Wright State Core course with a Service Learning designation
71 (SRV or SRV-I)

72 The second multicultural course may be offered and taken in any Element of the
73 Wright State Core, or students may take it as one of the additional Core courses.

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75 **B. Themed Clusters:** The committee endorses the creation of "Themed Clusters" of
76 courses as part of the Wright State Core. Themed Clusters will allow students to address
77 "big questions—both contemporary and enduring," and to integrate their learning across
78 disciplines. For example, the theme of "Environmental Sustainability" might be shared by
79 several classes in a term, including an EES class, a composition class, and a global
80 studies class exploring the environmental impact of global development. The theme of
81 "Technology and Society" might be common to a course in the natural sciences, a course
82 on the history of science and its impact upon society, and an anthropology course looking
83 at the technologies and social systems of different cultures. The theme of "Political
84 Discourse" might be shared by a PLS class, a composition class, and a humanities class
85 which focused in part on political philosophy. Such an approach would build upon the
86 successful first-year program, which groups students in "learning communities" taking
87 common classes in the current GE program. The committee envisions these themed
88 clusters as being available to students throughout their work in the Wright State Core, into
89 their second year of undergraduate study and beyond.

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91 **C. Themed Tracks:** The structure of the program shell also permits programs and
92 colleges to develop themed tracks for students, using courses in individual Elements as
93 well as the additional Core courses. Themed tracks might include "Cultural Diversity,"
94 "Western Civilization," "America in the World," and numerous other topics. Each of these
95 tracks could draw from different Elements and/or the additional Core courses.

96 **D. Interdisciplinary Courses:** Interdisciplinary courses include content or methodology
97 drawn explicitly from two or more disciplines and provide students with opportunities for
98 integrating knowledge. First, the committee expects that contributing departments will
99 continue to offer interdisciplinary courses on global studies within Element Three (see
100 below). Similarly, an interdisciplinary natural science course may be offered under the
101 WCS (Wright Core Science) prefix in Element Six. Further, the opportunities exist for
102 creative new courses on topics like Technology and Society, which could be taught in
103 Element Three, Element Five, or even Element Four, depending on the expertise of the
104 instructor. Such interdisciplinary courses as these would fall within a single Element of the
105 Core but allow for the material to be approached from the perspectives of several
106 disciplines. Alternatively, an interdisciplinary course could be offered that would count in
107 several Elements of the Core. For example, a single course in "Environmental
108 Sustainability" might count as a social science or as a course in global studies. Students
109 would be permitted to satisfy the requirement of either Element with such a course.

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111 **E. Vertical Integration:** To the degree possible, the Wright State Core should allow for
112 the appropriate designation of courses as being intended for new students or for students
113 in later years. This vertical integration of the Core within our students' programs of study
114 will allow us to structure learning and practice in key skills and core knowledge with an
115 awareness of our students' growth and development. For example, the two required
116 courses in writing (replacing ENG 101 and 102) will be ordered so that students should
117 take the first course during the first year but are required to take the second course in the
118 second year or later. This will encourage students to grow as academic writers within their
119 majors. Other vertically integrated sequences are possible.

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121 **F. Service Learning:** The committee encourages departments to offer courses that
122 include a Service Learning component in any Element of the Core. Courses that include
123 service learning reinforce their academic learning outcomes with service activities that
124 benefit both the students and the community; such courses also help students "participate
125 in democratic society as informed and civically engaged citizens," a university learning
126 objective. Currently, such courses are offered throughout the university curriculum. The
127 committee has included approved Core courses that are designated SRV and SRV-I
128 among those available to satisfy the multicultural competence requirement.

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130 **G. Technological Awareness:** University learning objectives include "understanding of
131 contemporary social and ethical issues." The Wright State Core will help prepare students
132 for careers in a technologically complex world. Students will conduct research, learn about
133 the world, and write texts in electronic environments. Students should also be able to
134 explore technology itself from a variety of viewpoints. The committee encourages
135 departments to create courses in any Element examining technology in its historical,
136 philosophical, and social dimensions.

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138 **H. Independent Learning Experiences:** Likewise, the committee encourages
139 departments to create opportunities for experiential learning outside the classroom,
140 including possibly undergraduate research, study abroad, or internships. The committee
141 proposes that students could take a maximum of seven hours of courses as Independent
142 Learning Experiences. All such Independent Learning Experiences must be preapproved
143 by the appropriate department and must be offered under course numbers preapproved by
144 the University General Education Committee.

145 **I. First Year Program:** The committee recommends building on the alignment between
 146 the Wright State Core and the First Year Program (FYP). The Wright State Core
 147 emphasizes foundational academic skills, breadth of knowledge, multicultural awareness,
 148 and integrated learning. As part of the FYP, most first-year students join learning
 149 communities, small groups of students co-enrolled in the same Wright State Core course
 150 and in a first year seminar. Many learning communities also include a service learning
 151 component and other activities designed to enhance students' multicultural awareness and
 152 civic engagement. Thus, in addition to promoting academic success, the learning
 153 community provides opportunities for integrating concepts encountered in the classroom
 154 with students' campus and community lives. The Wright State Core proposes to increase
 155 the visibility of these ties between Core learning outcomes and learning community
 156 experiences by providing themed clusters of courses in which students co-enroll and by
 157 offering multicultural and service learning courses. These alignments of the FYP and the
 158 Core will provide first year students with engaging learning experiences and extend similar
 159 experiences throughout the Core.

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161 **Learning Outcomes for Each Element:** At the completion of the Wright State Core, a
 162 student will be able to do the following:

| Element | Learning Outcomes |
|---|---|
| 1. Communication <i>The foundational skills students need in academic writing, research, and documentation in an electronic environment</i> | a. Adapt writing processes and strategies for audience, purpose, and type of task b. Organize and produce texts that meet the demands of specific genres, purposes, audiences, and stances c. Employ appropriate mechanics, usage, grammar, and spelling conventions d. Find, analyze, evaluate, summarize, and synthesize appropriate source material from both print and electronic environments e. Present focused, logical arguments that support a thesis f. Use reliable and varied evidence to support claims, incorporate ideas from sources appropriately, and acknowledge and document the work of others appropriately g. Use electronic environments to draft, revise, edit, and share or publish texts |

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| Element | Learning Outcomes |
|--|---|
| <p>2. Mathematics</p> <p><i>The foundational skills required to use and interpret mathematics and statistics</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identify the various elements of a mathematical or statistical model b. Determine the values of specific components of a mathematical/statistical model or relationships among various components c. Apply a mathematical/statistical model to a real-world problem d. Interpret and draw conclusions from graphical, tabular, and other numerical or statistical representations of data e. Summarize and justify analyses of mathematical/statistical models for problems, expressing solutions using an appropriate combination of words, symbols, tables or graphs |
| <p>3. Global Traditions</p> <p><i>Historical analysis and global perspectives necessary to understand our diverse world</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Critically describe some of the political, social or economic systems; historical, cultural or spiritual traditions; and/or technological innovations around the world b. Demonstrate an awareness of the diversity of people or traditions in our world in ways that promote effective engagement, both locally and globally c. Use political, social, economic, historical, cultural, spiritual or technological knowledge to evaluate contemporary issues |
| <p>4. Arts/Humanities</p> <p><i>Tools for analysis and appreciation of the arts, philosophy, and religious thought</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Critically analyze significant creative, philosophical or religious works b. Understand and discuss the complex blend of imaginative vision, socio-cultural context, ethical values, and aesthetic judgment in creative, philosophical or religious works c. Recognize, evaluate and respond to creative, philosophical or religious works d. Develop appropriate and ethical applications of knowledge in the humanities or the arts |

| Element | Learning Outcomes |
|---|--|
| <p>5. Social Science</p> <p><i>Perspectives on human behavior and culture informed by the disciplines of the social sciences</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Critically apply knowledge of social science theory and methods of inquiry to personal decisions, current issues, or global concerns b. Explain and critique the methods of inquiry of social science disciplines c. Demonstrate an understanding of the ethical issues involved in the acquisition or application of social science knowledge d. Demonstrate, from a social science perspective, an understanding of the responsibilities of an informed and engaged citizen to the success of democratic society |
| <p>6. Natural Science</p> <p><i>Introductions to the scientific understanding of physical and biological phenomena</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Understand the nature of scientific inquiry b. Critically apply knowledge of scientific theory and methods of inquiry to evaluate information from a variety of sources c. Distinguish between science and technology and recognize their roles in society d. Demonstrate an awareness of theoretical, practical, creative and cultural dimensions of scientific inquiry e. Discuss fundamental theories underlying modern science |

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167 **Learning Outcomes for the Multicultural Competence Course**

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169 At the conclusion of any approved Wright State Core class designated as meeting the
 170 Multicultural Competence requirement, a student will be able to do the following:

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172 a. Demonstrate knowledge of cultural, economic, social or racial diversities in the
 173 United States or throughout the world.

174 b. Apply the methods of inquiry of the natural sciences, social sciences or the arts
 175 and humanities to understand cultural, economic, social or racial diversity.

176 c. Demonstrate an understanding of contemporary social or ethical issues related to
 177 diversity.

178 d. Demonstrate skills required to engage in an informed and respectful way with
 179 diverse people, cultures and histories.

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181 **The Wright State Core Program Shell and Recommendations for Implementation**

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| Elements | Required distributions | HRS |
|-------------------------------|--|------------|
| 1. Communication | One freshman composition course One second-year writing course | 6 |
| 2. Mathematics | One course | 3 |
| 3. Global Traditions | One interdisciplinary Global Studies course One history course | 6 |
| 4. Arts/ Humanities | One course | 3 |
| 5. Social Science | Two courses from different disciplines | 6 |
| 6. Natural Science | Two lecture/lab science courses | 8 |
| Additional Core Courses | Two additional approved Wright State Core courses from any of the Elements (some programs may designate these courses) | 6 |
| Multicultural Competence | As part of the Core, in addition to the interdisciplinary Global Studies Course (Element 3), students must take a second designated multicultural competence class in any Element or as an additional course within the Core | n/a |
| Writing Across the Curriculum | As part of the Core, students must take two Integrated Writing (IW) Core courses | n/a |
| TOTAL | 12 courses | 38 |

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Recommendations for WAC in the Wright State Core

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In addition to two composition courses, all degree-seeking undergraduates must complete a minimum of two integrated writing (IW) courses in the Wright State Core.

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Recommendations for the Development of Wright State Core Courses

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Wright State Core courses will provide students foundational skills, breadth of knowledge, and perspectives for integrating learning. Each Core course should be designed to provide WSU students the experiences necessary to achieve the learning outcomes of the Core Element for which it is proposed. A course that meets the learning outcomes of two Elements may be listed in both, and credit for completing the course can be assigned to either Element. Most of the Core courses will be part of Wright State's Transfer Module and therefore should meet the requirements set by the Ohio Board of Regents. Core courses and the first course in a Core sequence should assume entry-level college proficiencies but, in general, not require additional prerequisites. Colleges, departments, and pre-professional programs may require particular Core courses for their majors. Some Core courses, for example Honors Program Core Courses, may be open only to students who meet specific criteria.

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204 Recommendations for the Approval Process for Wright State Core Courses

205 As part of Wright State's semester conversion course approval process, proposals for
206 Wright State Core courses will be reviewed by the University General Education
207 Committee (UGEC), a subcommittee of the Undergraduate Curriculum and Academic
208 Policy Committee, with consultation by the Semester Transition Team General
209 Education Subcommittee. Each submission should include a course inventory request,
210 a Core proposal, and a master syllabus. The master syllabus should clearly identify the
211 course learning outcomes. Templates for the proposal and master syllabus will be
212 available online.

214 Recommendations for Assessment of the Wright State Core Program

- 216 • UGEC will work with academic departments to address the Wright State Core
217 learning outcomes as part of their annual assessment.
- 218 • UGEC will work with the Undergraduate Academic Program Review Committee to
219 include assessment of the Core learning outcomes as part of the Academic Program
220 Review procedure.
- 221 • UGEC will continue to survey students regarding their assessment of GE (Wright
222 State Core) learning outcomes and will institute an annual survey of faculty teaching
223 Core courses.
- 224 • UGEC (and the WAC Committee whenever IW courses are involved) will work with
225 faculty teaching in each Element to develop direct assessment strategies. UGEC will
226 review assessment outcomes and based on the findings make recommendations for
227 continuous improvement. Elements will be reviewed on a rotating basis: Year 1 will
228 focus on Elements 1 and 2; year 2 will focus on Elements 3 and 4; and year 3 will
229 focus on Elements 5 and 6.

**231 Recommendations for the General Education Program to Wright State Core
232 Transition Plan**

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234 The Plan for transition and transfer students will be completed when the courses
235 proposed by the Colleges and Departments have been approved for inclusion in the
236 Core.

237 *Revised 11/17/09*

Multicultural Competence as a Baccalaureate Outcome in the WSU Curriculum

In accordance with Wright State University's vision to be "known and admired for our diversity and for the transformative impact we have on the lives of our students and on the communities we serve," the University Diversity Advisory Committee (UDAC) Cultural Competence Sub-committee proposes that **multicultural competence** be adopted as a required and essential outcome that is reflected in First-Year, general education, and major programming. As the world becomes "increasingly interconnected," we recognize that "the future lies at the Intersection," the place where "cultures, disciplines, concepts, and domains" intersect, where creative and innovative ideas that change the world are generated and realized (Johansson, 2006, pp. 186-189). Our students must be prepared to participate in and contribute to this interdependent global community. *College Learning for the New Global Century* (AAU&C, 2007), a report focusing on "what contemporary college graduates need to know and be able to do" includes "intercultural knowledge and competence" as one of the recommended "essential learning outcomes" needed to prepare students "for twenty-first-century challenges" (pp. 1-3). The process of curriculum development for the semester conversion, in which the university is currently engaged, provides an excellent opportunity for integrating this outcome into the curriculum. Preparing students to be multiculturally competent is consistent with the university's desire to renew the curriculum based on national best practices in an effort to prepare students well for the 21st century global world.

The committee defines **multicultural competence** as *the ability in personal and professional contexts to interact respectfully and effectively with diverse individuals and groups in a manner that recognizes, affirms, and values the worth, and protects the rights and dignity, of all*. To foster multicultural competence, the goals of the curriculum should include (a) increasing students' understanding of issues of race, gender, age, language, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, religion, ability or disability, sexual orientation, nationality, national origin, and other factors of diversity and hierarchy; and (b) developing their ability to recognize, analyze, and work to transform social relations favoring some groups and subjugating other groups, while understanding their own position in these relationships. The expected outcome is that students will graduate with the ability to interact with others productively in their communities, jobs, nation, and the world.

To implement and assess multicultural competence as a desired outcome, the university would need to identify specific measurable learning objectives that clearly articulate the knowledge, skills, and awareness students should be able to demonstrate. Listed below are potential learning objectives.

Awareness

Students will be able to demonstrate awareness of:

- Their own position in society—as influenced by cultural heritage, race, gender, class, ethnicity, etc.—and how it affects their values, assumptions, behavior, and actions.

- Their misconceptions or biases and how the resulting behavior and actions affect others, and inversely, how the behaviors of others affect them.
- The value of understanding different worldviews.

Knowledge

Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of self, and of groups and individuals who are different from self, specifically:

- What the United States experience is like for different groups of people.
- The importance of intra-group differences, multiple identities and multiple oppressions.
- The existence of systems of privilege and domination including the causes and effects of structured inequalities and prejudicial exclusion, and the effects not only on the victims, but also on the beneficiaries of these systems.
- How legal frameworks and policy incorporate and protect the rights and freedoms of individuals and groups.
- How positive personal and systemic change occurs through individual and collective actions.

Skills

Students will be able to demonstrate the ability to:

- Hone critical skills of listening, asking questions, reading, thinking, and making connections in order to have a well informed understanding of people from cultures different from their own.
- Perceive and openly discuss issues of cultural and group differences.
- Identify and challenge their own participation in processes that lead to insensitivity or social injustice, for instance by avoiding potentially offensive or discriminatory language, representations and behavior, and responding to situations in which others do so in a way that educates them.
- Empathize, gain trust and connect with individuals who are different from them, and navigate skillfully through different cultural contexts and circumstances.
- Identify areas of personal growth and develop a lifelong commitment to improving their own cultural competence.

References

Association of American Colleges and Universities. (2007). *College learning for the new global century: A report from the National Leadership Council for Liberal Education & America's Promise*. Washington, DC: Author.

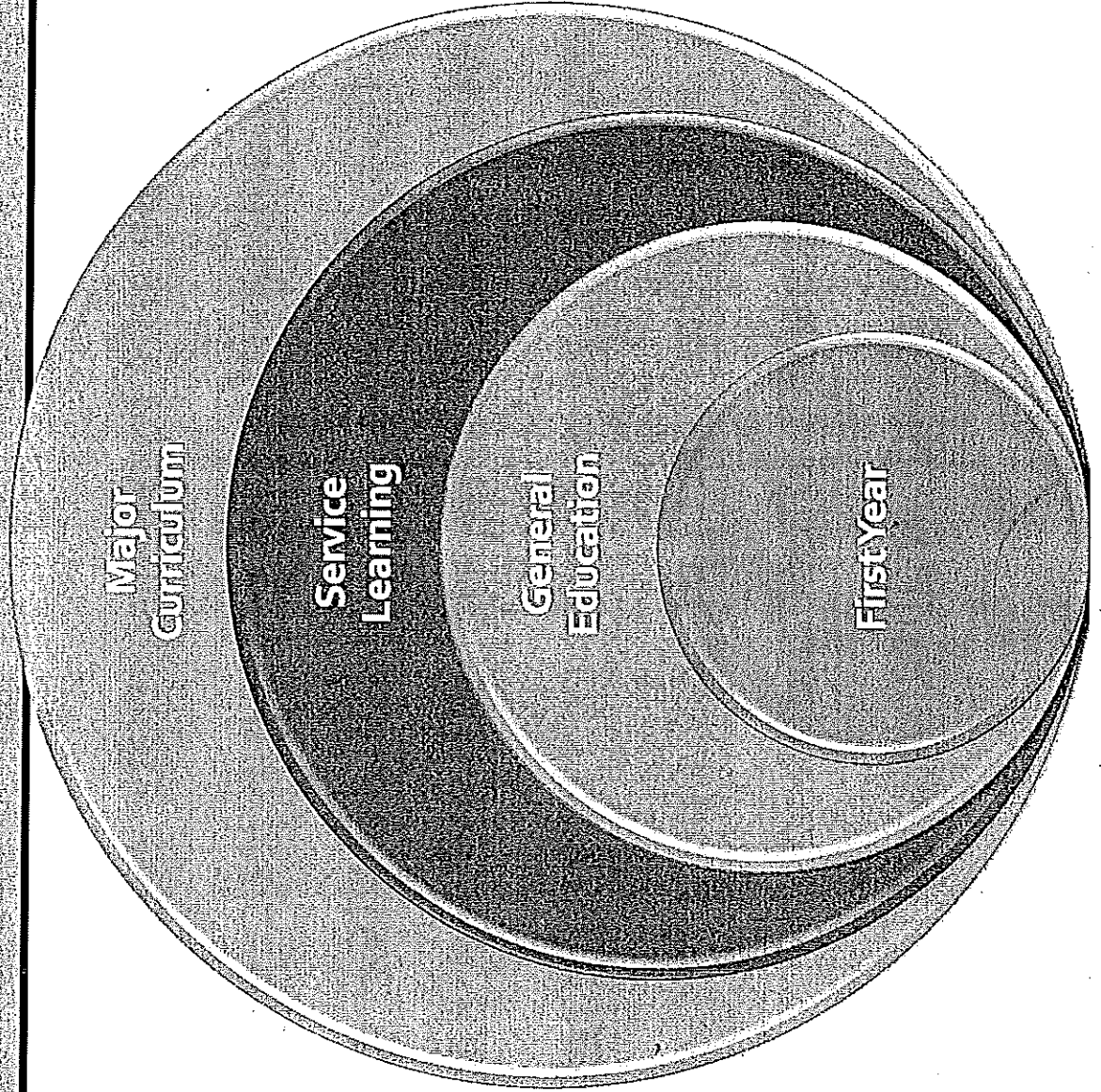
Johansson, F. (2006). *Medici effect: What elephants and epidemics can teach us about innovation*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Multicultural Competency at Wright State University

multicultural competence

- *The ability in personal and professional contexts to interact respectfully and effectively with diverse individuals and groups in a manner that recognizes, affirms, and values the worth, and protects the rights and dignity, of all.*
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 - (b) developing their ability to recognize, analyze, and work to transform social relations favoring some groups and subjugating other groups, while understanding their own position in these relationships.

Time Line



Awareness

- Students will be able to demonstrate awareness of:
- Their own position in society—as influenced by cultural heritage, race, gender, class, ethnicity, etc.—and how it affects their values, assumptions, behavior, and actions.
- Their misconceptions or biases and how the resulting behavior and actions affect others, and inversely, how the behaviors of others affect them.
- The value of understanding different worldviews.

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Skills

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- Perceive and openly discuss issues of cultural and group differences.
- Identify and challenge their own participation in processes that lead to insensitivity or social injustice, for instance by avoiding potentially offensive or discriminatory language, representations and behavior, and responding to situations in which others do so in a way that educates them.
- Empathize, gain trust and connect with individuals who are different from them, and navigate skillfully through different cultural contexts and circumstances.
- Identify areas of personal growth and develop a lifelong commitment to improving their own cultural competence.

Final Thought

University Vision Statement

"In the pioneering spirit of the Wright Brothers, Wright State will be Ohio's most innovative university, known and admired for our diversity and for the transformative impact we have on the lives of our students and on the communities we serve."

80% of the people who are fired, lose that position because they don't fit into the existing culture.