University of Colorado **Denver**

Updated CU Denver Core Curriculum Structure: Recommendations

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Context

The Reimagining the Core Curriculum working group (RCwg) began our work in November 2023, in response to our charge from the Office of the Provost. The charge asked the working group to "critically reflect on, research national models for, and propose a CU Denver-informed model for what makes sense to include in our 'general education'/'core curriculum' portfolio for students who declare different academic majors." The Office of the Provost identified three key questions related to this charge:

1. What must the structure and content of the core curriculum be for students in different academic majors to provide for their "broad education" yet find the components of the core to be germane to and complementary of their academic major focus and interests?
2. How should the core be configured to eliminate barriers to students' academic progression, especially when they need to switch majors?
3. How should documented prior learning and experiential learning factor into the general education core requirements?

In starting this process, we were asked to review the CU Denver student personas, which were developed through the university's 2022-23 student enrollment management (SEM) planning processes and informed by our location and context. The charge noted that CU Denver "serves a predominantly working learner commuter population of students seeking social mobility." Revisions to the core should, therefore, foreground the university's public-serving mission.

The RCwg researched, discussed, and analyzed a range of state and national core models and desirable workplace skills (via current job ads and employer surveys); conducted surveys of CU Denver students (see table of results on page 2) and faculty; held meetings with transfer advisors and coordinators; reviewed Guaranteed Transfer (GT) Pathways (Colorado's general education curriculum), Colorado Department of Higher Education, and Higher Learning Commission requirements; and studied the SEM student personas before reimagining and developing a structure for the core that is transfer-friendly and outcome-based. We should also note here that both the Fall 2023-24 and Reimagining the Core working groups and our Fall 2025 proposal working group included staff and faculty advisors at the university and college/school levels, as well as administrators and leaders from the Transfer Initiatives Program, Academic Achievement, Student Success, Academic Planning, Core Curriculum

Oversight Committee, and Registrar's Office. These members gave us feedback along the way on what core models and requirements were feasible, given our systems, students, and programs, and what aspects were not.

Student survey results ranking core objectives

Importance of Core Curriculum Objectives

	Extremely Important	Moderately Importa..	Slightly Important	Not at all Important
Broaden and deepen your perspective on being human	44%	37%	13%	6%
Learn and develop essential transferrable skills across a wide range of jobs or careers	60%	27%	10%	3%
Learn and develop skills across disciplines and perspectives to address complex social problems	42%	34%	17%	7%
Learn and develop skills to be an engaged and successful participant in your local, national, and global communities	39%	34%	21%	6%
Learn and develop skills to succeed academically	49%	35%	14%	2%

Student survey results ranking core structure

Preference towards Flexibility vs Sequence for Core Curriculum

Strongly prefer flexibility	55%
Somewhat prefer flexibility	20%
No preference between flexibility and sequence	13%
Somewhat prefer sequence	7%
Strongly prefer sequence	5%

Overview of New Core Recommendations

Since November 2023, the RCwg has gathered recommendations and feedback from multiple groups of faculty, staff, administrators, and students from every school and college. This proposal highlights changes and updates to the longer, more comprehensive report submitted

to the Office of the Provost in December 2024. The updates include a more streamlined and flexible set of requirements, which decrease the minimum number of credits from 34 to 30 (or 31) in line with GT Pathways guidelines and other Colorado universities. Below, we propose a holistic educational foundation of courses that guides students toward clear and compelling educational objectives, learning outcomes, and essential skills. We define each of these in the following ways:

- **Program educational objectives:** broad statements describing students' post-degree-attainment career and community capabilities that inform instructional design and course-to-course relationships.
- **Program learning outcomes**: statements of measurable and observable skills that students should be able to demonstrate upon completion of core requirements.
- **Core skills and abilities**: practices that can be measured or directly observed in particular courses, and that support the outcomes and long-term objectives.

Recommended Program Educational Objectives

The following statements describe the post-degree-attainment practices of CU Denver students who have successfully completed all the university's core curriculum requirements. As already mentioned, the RCwg researched national trends, American Association of Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) general education value rubrics and "high impact" practices, and CU Denver student data to create these three core objectives, which also reflect CU Denver's strategic priorities:

- Core Objective 1: An ethic of awareness: CU Denver students perceive and can respond to the pressing issues of the time, informed by a wide range of perspectives and experiences.
- Core Objective 2: An ethic of advocacy: CU Denver students are equipped to support change efforts in a variety of environments (workplace, community, state, national, global).
- Core Objective 3: An ethic of action: CU Denver students are engaged civic participants who deploy their knowledge in service to their communities.

Recommended Program Learning Outcomes (LOs) and Durable Skills

After conducting extensive research on the essential skills students now need to succeed in their courses, careers, and communities, the working group co-created the five learning outcomes and durable (transferable) skills listed below. These outcomes and skills are *suggestions* from the working group. Outcomes are (and should continue to be) created and revised by faculty in consultation with the university's Assessment Office and the CCOC. We also

acknowledge outcomes and skills must be "tested" in classrooms by faculty and regularly revised, if necessary. We simply recommend that the faculty, the Assessment Office, and the CCOC consider these outcomes and skills and adapt them according to program and disciplinary standards. No one course needs to incorporate all the outcomes; instead, students will be able to demonstrate them as a result of the successful completion of CU Denver's core curriculum. Thus, each learning outcome should be the result of a set of core courses, not the result of a single course. The skills and abilities associated with each outcome, however, can be learned and measured within a single core course. The skills and abilities for each of the core learning outcomes below should not be considered in conflict with GT Pathways learning outcomes, which articulate knowledge area and competency outcomes. Instead, these new outcomes should be added to the GT Pathways learning outcomes for GT Pathways-designated courses.

Core Learning Outcome 1: Integrative Problem-Solving (supports Core Objective 3): Students will be able to recognize a wide range of perspectives about a complex problem and employ a range of disciplinary and transdisciplinary strategies (e.g., social, economic, scientific, mathematical, global, historical, etc.) to address the problem.

Core Skills and Abilities for Learning Outcome 1:

- recognition and application of disciplinary perspectives and methods
- recognition and application of diverse global, social, ethical, and cultural perspectives
- ability to create novel solutions, services, products, etc.
- ability to engage in observation and hypothesis-making and testing
- recognition and application of logical reasoning
- understanding of historical, social, and institutional forms and standards of marginalization, access, and rights
- analyze technological systems within their historical, economic, political, and institutional contexts, recognizing how such systems both reflect and shape human values, social structures, power relations, and the environment
- select and appropriately apply technological tools (e.g., digital collaboration tools, computational problem-solving tools) to defined tasks or problems
- engage in ethical reasoning to evaluate the impacts of technological systems, such as AI systems, on individuals, communities, societies, and environments, including questions of equity, access, benefit distribution, harm, accountability, transparency, and moral responsibility
- a conceptual understanding of what constitutes complex problems

Core Learning Outcome 2: Effective and Strategic Communication (supports Core Objectives 1 and 2): Students will be able to effectively communicate across multiple modes to different audiences.

Core Skills and Abilities for Learning Outcome 2:

- ability to define the purposes of a communication and effectively utilize rhetorical tools, argument strategies, writing, and research to craft an argument
- exploration and application of written and other communication genres, formats, platforms, and techniques
- ability to differentiate communication modes and media among various audiences (including forms of distribution and circulation)
- ability to engage in effective feedback and revision processes
- understanding of how meaning-making occurs differently within and among individuals, groups, cultures, communities, and systems
- demonstrate informed judgment about when, why, and how AI and other writing and communication technologies are suitable and appropriate

Core Learning Outcome 3: Critical and Creative Thinking (supports all the Core Objectives): Students will be able to engage in effective critical and creative thinking practices applicable to a wide range of topics.

Core Skills and Abilities for Learning Outcome 3:

- ability to engage in critical and creative thinking and action in a range of contexts
- learn to define creativity in various contexts
- recognize creativity across diverse forms of expression (art, technology, entrepreneurship/business creation, etc.)
- ability to critically interpret, analyze, and differentiate across a variety of content types, genres, and formats
- ability to critically analyze information production and consumption
- apply critical inquiry and evidence-based reasoning to assess technological outputs and technological-related claims, distinguishing substantiated analysis from speculation, promotional rhetoric, or misinformation by identifying unsupported claims, bias, hallucinations, hidden assumptions, and logical or evidentiary gaps

- ability to be self-reflexive and to contextualize and describe how a student's personal experience and background are similar to and vary from those of others

Core Learning Outcome 4: Data Analysis and Application (supports Core Objectives 1 and 3): Students will be able to analyze and apply various forms of quantitative reasoning and data (e.g., statistics, visual data, empirical data, observational data, etc.) to understand various phenomena and address various problems.

Core Skills and Abilities for Learning Outcome 4:

- ability to understand, draw inferences from, and employ technological and data science (e.g., AI, machine learning) literacies to find meaning
- ability to utilize various forms of quantitative reasoning to understand, engage with, and work to solve problems
- ability to perform accurate calculations, to translate between representations, and to draw meaningful insight from them
- ability to develop or apply mathematical and/or statistical models
- ability to interpret and apply non-quantitative forms of data, such as visual and qualitative data
- formulate effective inputs, constraints, and evaluation criteria (e.g., prompts, data selection, validation strategies) to guide data systems toward intended data outcomes
- assess the outcomes of technological and data collection and analysis and revise strategies based on accuracy, effectiveness, fairness, and contextual relevance
- articulate and apply principles of responsible technology (e.g., AI, machine learning) use, including attention to data integrity, privacy, intellectual property, and appropriate attribution

Core Learning Outcome 5: Teamwork and Collaboration (supports all the Core Objectives): Following successful completion of the university's core curriculum, students will be able to collaborate with others from different academic, disciplinary, and cultural backgrounds.

Core Skills and Abilities for Learning Outcome 5:

- ability to address and solve complex problems collaboratively and creatively
- skills in listening and responding to feedback and resolving conflict when it arises

- skills in sharing insights and helpful feedback with group members
- ability to facilitate inclusive practices that are respectful to all group members
- know and enact the rules of collaboration
- ability to participate in acts of co-creation

Recommended New Core Structure

Our recommended new core structure is based on the above objectives, outcomes, and skills, which emphasize the ethics and abilities necessary to address and solve emerging complex social problems. Feedback from students, staff, faculty, and administrators has continually stressed the importance of reducing the number of overall credit hours in the core and incorporating interdisciplinary approaches to current issues such as sustainability and AI, local and regional histories and cultures, diversity, and social justice. Our recommended structure incorporates both notions into a model that flexibly serves students with diverse academic needs and backgrounds.

Thus, the proposed reimagined CU Denver core curriculum is characterized by:

- A focus on integrated learning
- Clearly articulated educational objectives
- Learning outcomes and skills
- Ease of transfer

These current core recommendations, which we updated in response to Core Curriculum Oversight Committee (CCOC) leadership and other faculty and administrative groups, align with GT Pathways and are transfer-friendly. To make the intellectual competencies more flexible and in line with current workplace durable skills, we recommend revising the competencies from composition and mathematics to multimodal communication (still requiring CO1 or CO2/CO3 GT Pathways designations) and quantitative reasoning (still requiring MA1 GT Pathways designation). To reduce the overall number of required core courses, we recommend Cultural Diversity and International Perspectives requirements be met by designated courses (marked "CD" and "IP") within two larger knowledge areas—Arts & Humanities and Behavioral & Social Sciences. All the current Cultural Diversity and International Perspectives courses could be moved to knowledge area categories. Cultural Diversity and International Perspectives are also a strong part of the learning objectives outlined above, so we recommend those particular outcomes be fully incorporated into core courses.

The basic requirements are as follows:

Required Core Courses (GT Pathways and transfer-friendly)

- 6 credits of multimodal communication
- 3 credits of quantitative reasoning
- 15 credits of Arts & Humanities, Behavioral & Social Sciences, Cultural Diversity (designated Arts & Humanities and Social Sciences & Behavioral Sciences courses marked "CD"), and International Perspectives (designated Arts & Humanities and Social Sciences & Behavioral Sciences courses marked "IP")
  - Arts & Humanities – 3 credits
  - Social & Behavioral Sciences – 3 credits
  - Cultural Diversity (designated A/H, BS/SS courses, including current Cultural Diversity core courses) – 3 credits
  - International Perspectives (designated A/H, BS/SS courses, including current International Perspectives courses or a waiver for prior learning) – 3 credits
  - Choice of one of the above categories – 3 credits
- 6-7 credits of Natural and Physical Sciences (with or without a lab)

  Total = 30-31 credits

Below is a chart that demonstrates how the proposed core reduces the number of overall credit hours, retains requirements in Cultural Diversity and International Perspectives, and broadens the knowledge-area categories to allow students more options and flexibility.

Credits	Current Core	GT Pathways Core	Proposed Core 2/2026
3	ENGL 1020 (CO1)	Written Communication CO1 or CO2	MMC (CO1-2)
3	ENGL 2030 (CO2)	Written Communication CO2 or CO3	MMC (CO2-3)
3	Math (MA1)	Mathematics MA1	QUA REAS (MA1)
3	Arts	Arts & Humanities AH1-4	A/H, inc. HI (AH1-4, HI1)
3	Humanities	Arts & Humanities AH1-4	N/A
3	N/A	History HI1	N/A
3	Behavioral	N/A	N/A
3	Social	Behavioral/Social Sciences SS1-3	BS/SS

3	N/A	Choice Add (AH1-4/HI1/SS1-3)	Choice Add A/H, BS/SS (AH1-4/HI1/SS1-3)
4	NPS w/Lab	SC1	SC1 or SC2, with or w/o lab (3-4 credits)
3	NPS w/o Lab	SC2 or SC1	SC1 or SC2 with or w/o lab (3-4 credits)
3	Intl Persp	N/A	Designated Intl Persp in AH, HI, BS, SS knowledge areas
3	Cultural Div	N/A	Designated Cultural Diversity in AH, HI, BS, SS knowledge areas
Total	34	31	30-31

GT Pathways Courses:

- CO1 (Introduction to Writing Course)
- CO2 (Intermediate Writing Course)
- CO3 (Advanced Writing Course)
- MA1 (Mathematics)
- AH1 (Arts and Expression)
- AH2 (Literature and Humanities)
- AH3 (Ways of Thinking)
- AH4 (World Languages)
- HI1 (History)
- SS1 (Economic or Political Systems)
- SS2 (Geography)
- SS3 (Human Behavior, Culture, or Social Frameworks)
- SC1 (Natural & Physical Science course with required laboratory)
- SC2 (Natural & Physical Science course without required laboratory)

Knowledge Area and Competencies

- MMC – multimodal communication
- QUA REAS – quantitative reasoning
- A – Arts
- H – Humanities
- HI – History
- BS – Behavioral Sciences
- SS – Social Sciences
- Intl Persp – International Perspectives
- Cultural Div – Cultural Diversity

Below is another chart comparing core curricula at other major Colorado universities, which demonstrates increasing alignment across institutions with the GT Pathways core.

GT-Pathways State Core	Metro State	CU Boulder*	UCCS**	CSU	UNC	Current CU Denver	New CU Denver Core
6 Written Comm	6 Written Comm	College of Arts & Sciences: 45 total credits	6 Written Comm	6 Written Comm	6 Written Comm	6 ENGL Core Composition	6 Multimodal Communication (CO1 + CO2)
3 Math	3 Quantitative Literacy	School of Business: 21 gen ed credits	3 Quantitative Reasoning	3 Quantitative Reasoning	3 Math	3-4 Math	3 Quantitative Reasoning (MA1)
6 Arts & Hum	6 Arts & Hum	College of Comm & Media: 38-54 total credits	3 Arts & Hum	6 Arts & Hum	3 Arts & Hum	3 Arts, 3 Hum	6 Arts & Hum
3 History	3 Historical	School of Ed: 40 credits	n/a (Inc. In A & H)	3 Historical Persp	3 History	n/a (included in Hum)	n/a (included in A & H)
3 Soc & Behav Sci	6 Soc & Behav Sci	College of Engineering: Set of Grad Reqs (GPA, residence, capstone, etc.)	3 Soc & Behav Sci	3 Soc & Behav Sci	3 Soc & Behav Sci	3 Soc Sci, 3 Behav Sci	6 Soc & Behav Sci
7 Nat & Phys Sci (includes 1 minimum lab)	6 Nat & Phys Sci (no lab req)	College of Music: Set of Grad Reqs (Residence, Private Instruction, etc.)	3 Nat & Phys Sci (no lab req)	7 Nat & Phys Sci (includes 1 minimum lab)	7 Nat & Phys Sci (includes 1 minimum lab)	7 Nat & Phys Sci, Math (includes 1 minimum lab)	6 (minimum) Nat & Phys Sci (with or without lab)
3 of A & H or SS & BS	3 Oral Comm (includes language), 3 Global Diversity Designation		6 Writing Intensive Designation, 3 Inclusiveness Designation, 3 Sustainability Designation, 3 IDIS outside major Designation, 3 Capstone Designation, Writing Portfolio	3 Cultural Identity Designation	3 U.S. Multicultural Studies Designation, 3 International Studies Designation	3 Intl Persp, 3 Cultural Diversity	3 Choice of Arts, Hum, Soc Sci, or Behav Sci

31 credits	33-36 credits	0-54 credits	36 credits + Writing Portfolio	31 credits	31 credits	34-40 credits	30-31 credits

*CU Boulder has created and will assess a set of common learning outcomes for all students to meet "common curriculum" accreditation requirements.

**UCCS advisor told our working group they are working to align their core with GT pathways.

For further reference, Colorado Mesa University and Fort Lewis College's cores also closely resemble the state's GT Pathways 31-credit core and include a science lab requirement.

Recommended Cluster/Certificate or Badge Core Pathways

While thematic clusters are no longer part of the core revision ballot, we still recommend CCOC work with faculty to create thematic arrangements, perhaps based on sustainability or a just society, of the core requirements. Coherent learning frameworks informed by a wide range of disciplines and fields would better support integrated learning experiences for all undergraduate students. By organizing the core curriculum into thematic clusters, students will have access to choice and flexibility within a cohesive structure. We recommend the clusters feature the following key aspects:

1. **Interdisciplinary Approach**: Core courses from various fields should support students' ability to explore a central theme and develop their recognition of connections across disciplines.
2. **Thematic Structure**: Topical or conceptual themes should be broad and specific, encouraging students to explore an overall idea across multiple courses, while developing their knowledge in particular core and GT Pathways knowledge areas and competencies. Theme possibilities include sustainability, social justice, technology and society, global cultures, and health and wellness. However, given the many ways to develop themes within this revised core curriculum, this may offer a rich opportunity for student and faculty input and innovation.
3. **Embedded Skills Development**: Throughout each core course, students should develop intellectual skills that include critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving. Development of these skills can be supported through collaborative learning opportunities (e.g., projects), experiential learning, and similar activities. Foundational academic skills also may be developed in an introductory course or first-year seminar.
4. **Student Success**: We recommend that all first-year, first-time students participate in a thematic cluster, even if it is the more generic general education foundational skills cluster, supported by undergraduate advising. Requiring student participation in a thematic cluster may follow the development and piloting of the model; we perceive

that thematic clusters should principally support student success, and that their design should not obstruct student progress.

5. **Flexibility**: Students should be able to choose a unique conceptual or topical theme or cluster that aligns with their personal interests and/or career goals, supporting a more personalized educational experience.

We also suggest that each cluster incorporate an initial First-Year Experience (first-year seminar, UNIV course, learning community, etc.), which introduces students to the cluster theme while supporting their development of fundamental academic skills and an experiential learning component (internship, study abroad, service learning, etc.) to prepare students for current job and community responsibilities. Below are additional characteristics and considerations for the thematic clusters. Again, the clusters are not on the ballot. The group is only recommending CCOC work together with faculty to create and pilot them if the core proposal passes.

<u>Thematic Cluster/Certificate Characteristics</u>

1. High-Impact Practices: High-Impact Practices (HIPs), as articulated by the AAC&U, are evidence-based teaching and learning experiences that meaningfully deepen student engagement, learning, and persistence. These practices share several defining features: they require significant time and effort, invite frequent and constructive feedback, promote interaction with faculty and peers, and engage students in real-world or integrative learning.

   - Examples of AAC&U-identified HIPs include first-year seminars, learning communities, undergraduate research, service learning and community-based learning, internships and field experiences, capstone projects, and collaborative assignments—all pedagogies that invite students to apply what they are learning in complex, authentic contexts.
   - Implemented at CU Denver, each thematic cluster should incorporate an initial First-Year Experience (FYE), which may be a first-year seminar, UNIV course, learning community; these experiences introduce students to the cluster theme while also supporting their development of fundamental academic skills.
   - As mentioned above, thematic clusters should also include an experiential learning component, which may include internship, study abroad, or service learning, as these experiences help to prepare students for job and community responsibilities. (This requirement will include a mechanism for waiver or exception for majors that require internship and/or practicum.)
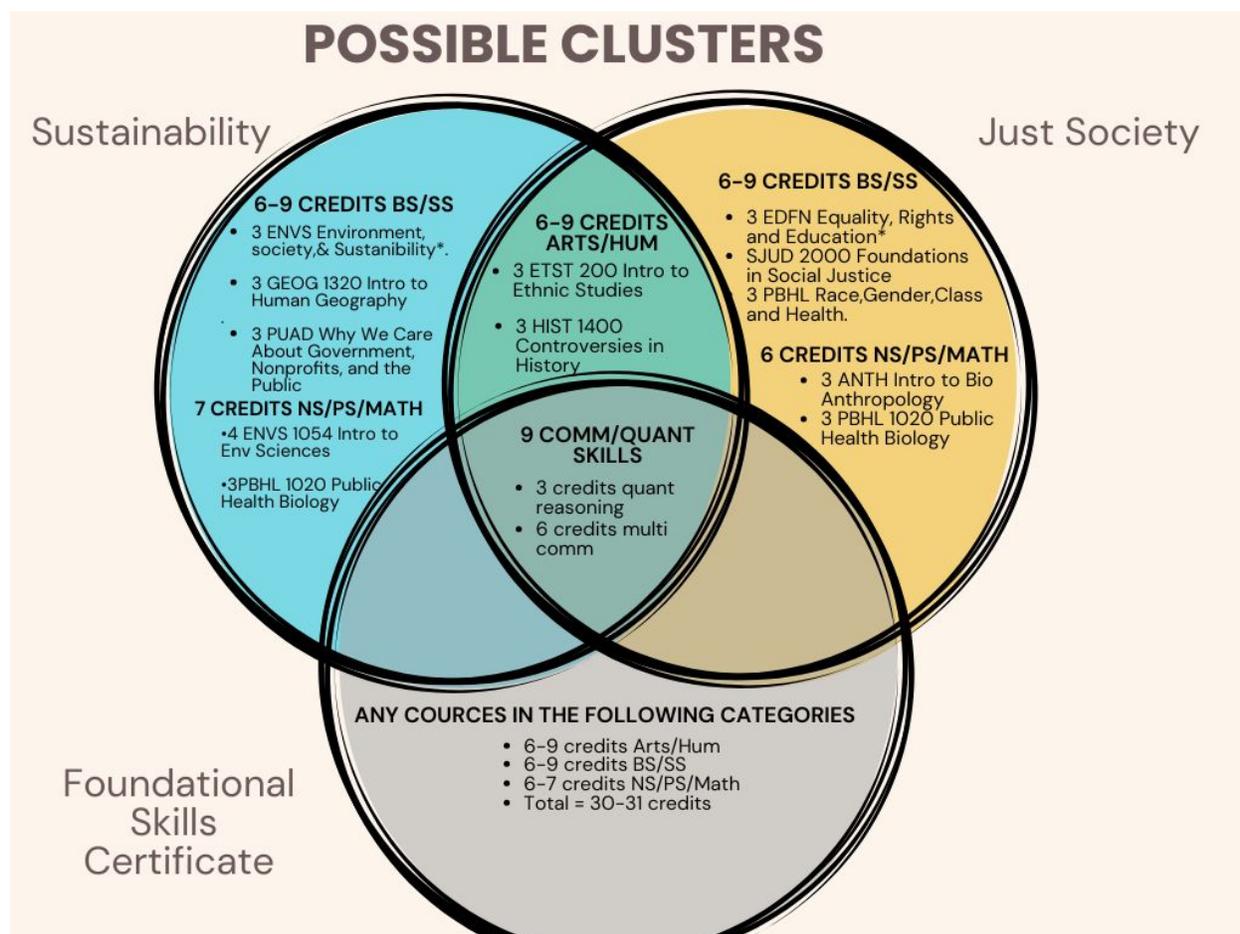
2. Incorporated and assessed learning outcomes of current Cultural Diversity and International Perspectives knowledge areas: As mentioned earlier, Cultural Diversity and International Perspectives will move from standalone course requirements to foundational elements woven across the thematic clusters that organize the remaining knowledge areas. Rather than narrowing their presence, this approach is designed to broaden and deepen students' engagement with these essential areas of learning. By integrating Cultural Diversity and International Perspectives into each thematic cluster, the Core ensures that students encounter these perspectives not only in isolated courses but across multiple disciplines, modalities, and contexts.

- We recognize that many faculty value the depth of learning supported by the current standalone CD and IP categories. The new structure is intentionally designed to preserve—and, in many cases, enhance—that depth by embedding clear learning outcomes, assessment expectations, and HIPs that require students to engage meaningfully with cultural, global, and systemic issues throughout their core experience.
- This shift reflects a commitment to inclusive and integrative learning, ensuring that all students develop robust, multilayered understandings of cultural diversity and international perspectives as they move through the core.
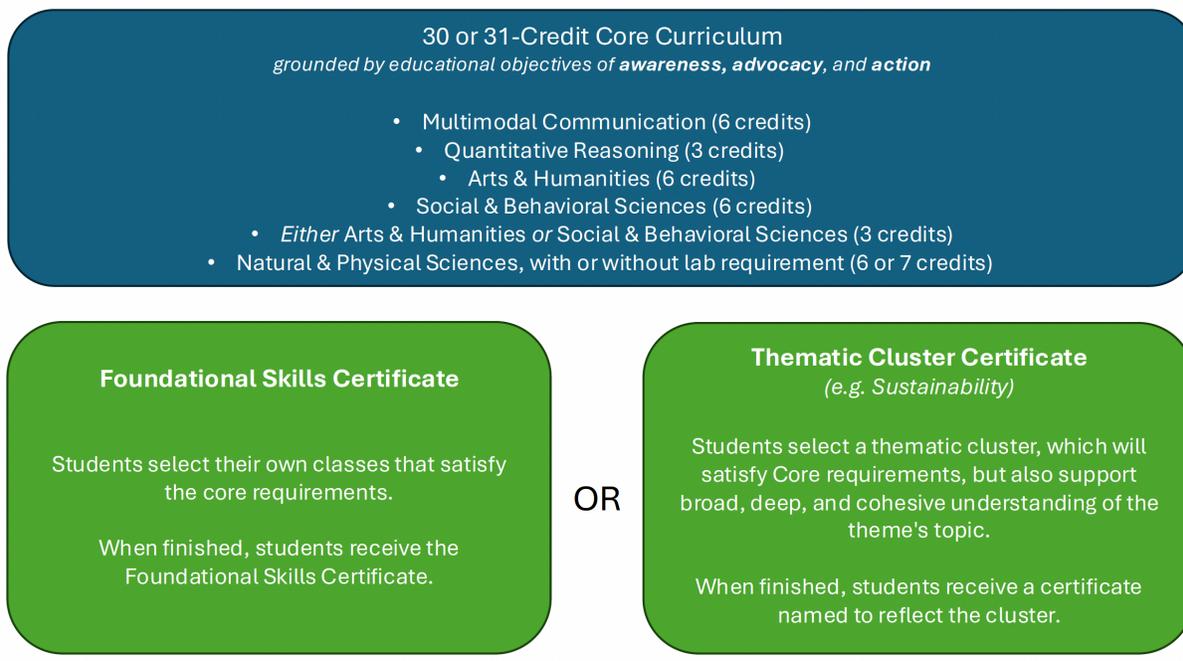
Thematic Cluster/Certificate Considerations

- Transferability: Students who *transfer into* CU Denver *may* experience thematic clusters via certificates or/and capstones. Students who *transfer from* CU Denver to public institutions in Colorado will carry with them GT Pathways and/or readily transferable general education courses.
- Student access: While we recommend that the core be organized thematically, its design should ensure that students have a wide range of course options at various dates and times and in various modalities (e.g., face-to-face, hybrid, online).
- Design: To the best and most reasonable extent, the core curriculum should continue to include many courses across a wide range of GT Pathways-aligned knowledge areas and competencies. Each thematic cluster should, in total, offer opportunities for students to develop each of the core durable skills and learning outcomes, supporting and guiding their ultimate cultivation of the core objectives.
- Learning: It was beyond working group scope to systematically study whether the core at CU Denver has historically enhanced or obstructed student success. An approach

focused on learning will support understanding how thematic clusters contribute to or hinder student success.

Below are two *examples* of thematic cluster certificates that may be offered in a new core curriculum. While we include *only existing core courses* in our examples, new courses can be proposed for each of the clusters. For example, Arts courses focused on sustainability or the environment could be added to the Arts/Humanities section of the Sustainability cluster below. Also below is a visualization of the two new main core pathways for students: the Foundational Skills Certificate Pathway or the Thematic Cluster Certificate Pathway.

POSSIBLE CLUSTERS

Sustainability

Just Society

Foundational Skills Certificate

6-9 CREDITS BS/SS
- 3 ENVS Environment, society,& Sustanibility*.
- 3 GEOG 1320 Intro to Human Geography
- 3 PUAD Why We Care About Government, Nonprofits, and the Public

7 CREDITS NS/PS/MATH
- 4 ENVS 1054 Intro to Env Sciences
- 3PBHL 1020 Public Health Biology

6-9 CREDITS ARTS/HUM
- 3 ETST 200 Intro to Ethnic Studies
- 3 HIST 1400 Controversies in History

9 COMM/QUANT SKILLS
- 3 credits quant reasoning
- 6 credits multi comm

6-9 CREDITS BS/SS
- 3 EDFN Equality, Rights and Education*
- SJUD 2000 Foundations in Social Justice
  3 PBHL Race,Gender,Class and Health.

6 CREDITS NS/PS/MATH
- 3 ANTH Intro to Bio Anthropology
- 3 PBHL 1020 Public Health Biology

ANY COURCES IN THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES
- 6-9 credits Arts/Hum
- 6-9 credits BS/SS
- 6-7 credits NS/PS/Math
- Total = 30-31 credits

> ### 30 or 31-Credit Core Curriculum
> *grounded by educational objectives of **awareness**, **advocacy**, and **action***
>
> - Multimodal Communication (6 credits)
> - Quantitative Reasoning (3 credits)
> - Arts & Humanities (6 credits)
> - Social & Behavioral Sciences (6 credits)
> - *Either* Arts & Humanities *or* Social & Behavioral Sciences (3 credits)
> - Natural & Physical Sciences, with or without lab requirement (6 or 7 credits)

Foundational Skills Certificate

Students select their own classes that satisfy the core requirements.

When finished, students receive the Foundational Skills Certificate.

OR

Thematic Cluster Certificate
(e.g. Sustainability)

Students select a thematic cluster, which will satisfy Core requirements, but also support broad, deep, and cohesive understanding of the theme's topic.

When finished, students receive a certificate named to reflect the cluster.

More Detailed Sample Clusters/Certificates

Sample Foundational Skills Certificate

- 6 credits of multimodal communication
- 3 credits of quantitative reasoning
- 15 credits of Arts & Humanities, Behavioral & Social Sciences, Cultural Diversity (designated Arts & Humanities and Social Sciences & Behavioral Sciences courses marked "CD"), and International Perspectives (designated Arts & Humanities and Social Sciences & Behavioral Sciences courses marked "IP")
  - ο Arts & Humanities – 3 credits
  - ο Social & Behavioral Sciences – 3 credits
  - ο Cultural Diversity (designated A/H, BS/SS courses, including current Cultural Diversity core courses) – 3 credits
  - ο International Perspectives (designated A/H, BS/SS courses, including current International Perspectives courses or a waiver for prior learning) – 3 credits
  - ο Choice of one of the above categories – 3 credits
- 6-7 credits of Natural and Physical Sciences (with or without a lab)
  Total=30-31 credits

Sample Sustainability Certificate

Suggested elements:

a. <u>Innovative Pathways to a Sustainable Future</u>: A course introducing first-year students to the topic of sustainability, also supporting their development of academic success skills

b. <u>Environmental Science 101: Introduction to Environmental Science</u>: Focuses on ecosystems, biodiversity, and sustainability practices

c. <u>Sustainable Urban Development</u>: Examines sustainable practices in urban planning and development

d. <u>Renewable Energy Systems</u>: Covers the principles and technologies behind renewable energy sources like solar, wind, and hydro power

Required courses:

- 6 credits of multimodal communication (CO1/CO2 or CO2/CO3)
- 3 credits of quantitative reasoning (MA1)
- 15 credits of Arts/Humanities, Behavioral/Social Sciences, International Perspectives, and Cultural Diversity
  - Arts and Humanities – 3-12 credits:
    ETST 2000: Introduction to Ethnic Studies

    ETST 2108: Introduction to Chicanx and Latinx Studies

    ETST 3110: Indigenous Studies (could become lower division?)

    HIST 1400: Controversies in History

    HIST 1381: The History of Now

    INTS 2020: Foundations of International Studies

    LDAR 1015: Engaging Landscapes for Wicked Change

    PHIL 1020: Right, Wrong, and Seeing the Difference: Introduction to Ethics

    RLST 3800: Spirituality and Ecology in Global Societies (could become lower division?)

  - Social and Behavioral Sciences – 3-12 credits:
    ANTH 2102: Culture and the Human Experience

    ANTH 3200: Nations and Migrations (could become lower division?)

    CLDE 1000: Language, Identity, & Power: International Perspectives

    COMM 1011: Communication and Communities

    ENVS 1342: Environment, Society, and Sustainability

    GEOG 1102: World Regions Global Context

GEOG 1302: Introduction to Human Geography

GEOG 1602: Urban Studies and Planning

HDFR 1000: Global Human Development & Learning

PSYCH 1000: Introduction to Psychology I

PBHL 2001: Introduction to Public Health

PBHL 2052: Global Demography and Health

PUAD 1001: Why We Care About Government, Nonprofits, and the Public Good

SOCY 2462: Introduction to Social Psychology

SOCY 3330: Social Problems (could become lower division?)

- 6-7 credits of Natural & Physical Sciences, Mathematics (with or without a lab)
  ANTH 1303: Introduction to Biological Anthropology (for non-science majors)
  BIOL 1400: Biology for All (for non-science majors)
  BIOL 2010: Organisms to Ecosystems + Lab (Gen Bio for science majors)
  ENVS 1044: Introduction to Environmental Sciences + Lab (for non-science majors)
  GEOL 1073: Physical Geology: Surface Processes + Lab (for non-science majors)
  GEOG 1202: Introduction to Physical Geography
  PBHL 1020: Public Health Biology
  PSYC 2220: Biological Basis of Behavior

  Total = 30 or 31 credits

- **Sample Just Society Certificate**
  Suggested elements:
  a. Empowering Communities: Strategies for Social Justice and Equity: A course introducing first-year students to the topics of social justice and equity, also supporting their development of academic success skills
  b. Introduction to Social Justice: Explores the concepts of equity, justice, and human rights
  c. Race, Class, and Gender: Analyzes the intersections of race, class, and gender in society
  d. Community Engagement and Advocacy: Practical course involving community service- and advocacy-focused learning

  Required Courses:
- 6 credits of multimodal communication (CO1/CO2 or CO2/CO3)

- 3 credits of quantitative reasoning (MA1)
- 15 credits of Arts/Humanities, Behavioral/Social Sciences, International Perspectives, and Cultural Diversity
  - Arts and Humanities – 6-12 credits:

    ANTH 2400 Global Storytelling Cultures

    ENGL 3795: Race & Ethnicity in American Literature (could become lower division?)

    ETST 2000: Introduction to Ethnic Studies

    ETST 2108: Introduction to Chicanx and Latinx Studies

    ETST 3110: Indigenous Studies (could become lower division?)

    ETST 3272: Global Media (could become lower division?)

    HIST 1381: History of Now

    LDAR 1015: Engaging Landscapes for Wicked Change

    PHIL 1020: Right, Wrong, and Seeing the Difference: Intro to Ethics

    WGST 3020: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in Popular Culture (could become lower division)

  - Social and Behavioral Sciences – 6-12 credits:

    ANTH 2102 Culture and the Human Experience

    COMM Communication and Communities

    COMM 3272 Communication and Cultural Diversity (could become lower division?)

    EDFN 1000 Equality, Rights, & Education

    ENVS 1342 Environment, Society, and Sustainability

    GEOG 1202 World Regions, Global Context

    GEOG 1302 Introduction to Human Geography

    GEOG 1602 Urban Studies and Planning

    PBHL 1001 Race, Gender, Class & Health

    PBHL 2052 Global Demography and Health

    SJUS 2000 Foundations in Social Justice

- 6-7 credits of Natural & Physical Sciences, Mathematics (with or without a lab)

  ANTH 1303: Introduction to Biological Anthropology (non-science majors)

  BIOL 1400: Biology for All (for non-science majors)

  BIOL 2010: Organisms to Ecosystems + Lab (Gen Bio for science majors)

  ENVS 1044: Introduction to Environmental Sciences + Lab (non-science majors)

  PBHL 1020: Public Health Biology

PSYC 2220: Biological Basis of Behavior

Total = 30-31 credits

New Core Objectives, Outcomes, and Skills Applied to Sample Sustainability Cluster

The chart below demonstrates how the new durable skills, learning outcomes, and objectives outlined in the beginning of this report **might** apply to a sample sustainability core cluster of courses. Here's a reminder of the differences among the objectives, outcomes, and skills:

- **Program educational objectives:** broad statements describing students' post-degree-attainment career and community capabilities that inform instructional design and course-to-course relationships.
- **Program learning outcomes**: statements of measurable and observable skills that students should be able to demonstrate upon completion of core requirements.
- **Core skills and abilities**: practices that can be measured or directly observed in particular courses, and that support the outcomes and long-term objectives.

In addition to the skills, outcomes, and objectives from those early pages, we have included durable skills related to sustainability in the second column below. Of course, this chart is not comprehensive, nor is it meant to be implemented. Unit faculty and the CCOC will oversee new assessment policies and procedures when the faculty approve the new core.

Course	Durable Skills: Measured Within Individual Courses	Learning Outcomes: Measured Across Courses	Core Objectives: Measured After Completing Core
ENGL 1020	1.Analyze and Apply Multimodal Communication Genres, Modes & Formats. 2. Engage in critical and creative thinking in a range of contexts. 3. Select and appropriately apply AI tools to defined tasks. 4.Listen and respond effectively to feedback.	1. Strategic Communication 2. Critical & Creative Thinking 3. AI Analysis & Application 4. Teamwork & Collaboration	1. Ethic of Awareness 2. Ethic of Advocacy 3. Ethic of Action
ENGL 2030	1.Analyze and Apply Multimodal Communication Genres, Modes & Formats. 2. Engage in critical and creative thinking in a range of contexts. 3. Select and appropriately apply AI tools to defined tasks. 4. Listen and respond effectively to feedback.		
MATH 1110	1.Utilize various forms of quantitative reasoning to understand, engage with, and work to solve problems. 2. Perform accurate calculations, to translate between representations, and to draw meaningful insight from them. 3. Listen and respond effectively to feedback.	1. Data Analysis & Application 2. Teamwork & Collaboration	
ETST 2000	1.Recognize and apply diverse global, social, ethical, and cultural perspectives. 2. Understand historical, social, and institutional forms and standards of marginalization, access, and rights. 3. Engage in critical and creative thinking and action in a range of contexts. 4. Interpret and apply non-quantitative forms of data, such as visual and qualitative data. 5. Address and solve complex problems collaboratively. 6. Facilitate inclusive practices that are respectful to all group members	1. Integrative Problem-Solving 2. Critical & Creative Thinking 3. Data Analysis & Application 4. Teamwork & Collaboration	
HIST 1400	1. Engage in critical and creative thinking and action in a range of contexts. 2. Interpret and apply non-quantitative forms of data, such as visual and qualitative data. 3. Address and solve complex problems collaboratively.	1. Critical & Creative Thinking 2. Data Analysis & Application 3. Teamwork & Collaboration	
ENVS 1342	1.Recognize and apply disciplinary perspectives and methods. 2. Recognize and apply diverse global, social, ethical, and cultural perspectives. 3. Engage in observation and hypothesis-making and testing. 4. Engage in critical and creative thinking and action in a range of contexts. 5. Perform accurate calculations, to translate between representations, and to draw meaningful insight from them. 6. Interpret and apply non-quantitative forms of data, such as visual and qualitative data. 7. Address and solve complex problems collaboratively. 8. Understand ecosystems and biodiversity and describe and demonstrate sustainability practices.	1. Integrative Problem-Solving 2. Critical & Creative Thinking 3. Data Analysis & Application 4. Teamwork & Collaboration	

GEOG 1602	1.Recognize and apply disciplinary perspectives and methods. 2. Recognize and apply diverse global, social, ethical, and cultural perspectives. 3. Engage in observation and hypothesis-making and testing. 4. Engage in critical and creative thinking and action in a range of contexts. 5. Perform accurate calculations, to translate between representations, and to draw meaningful insight from them. 6. Interpret and apply non-quantitative forms of data, such as visual and qualitative data. 7. Address and solve complex problems collaboratively. 8. Evaluate sustainable practices in urban planning and development.		
ENVS 1054	1.Recognize and apply disciplinary perspectives and methods. 2. Recognize and apply diverse global, social, ethical, and cultural perspectives. 3. Engage in observation and hypothesis-making and testing. 4. Engage in critical and creative thinking and action in a range of contexts. 5. Perform accurate calculations, to translate between representations, and to draw meaningful insight from them. 6. Interpret and apply non-quantitative forms of data, such as visual and qualitative data. 7. Address and solve complex problems collaboratively. 8. Understand and demonstrate the principles and technologies behind renewable energy sources like solar, wind, and hydro power.		

PUAD 1001	1.Recognize and apply disciplinary perspectives and methods. 2. Recognize and apply diverse global, social, ethical, and cultural perspectives. 3. Engage in observation and hypothesis-making and testing. 4. Analyze and Apply Multimodal Communication Genres, Modes & Formats. 5. Engage in critical and creative thinking and action in a range of contexts. 6. Perform accurate calculations, to translate between representations, and to draw meaningful insight from them. 7. Interpret and apply non-quantitative forms of data, such as visual and qualitative data. 8. Address and solve complex problems collaboratively.	1. Integrative Problem-Solving 2. Strategic Communication 3. Critical & Creative Thinking 4. Data Analysis & Application 5. AI Analysis & Application 6. Teamwork & Collaboration	
PBHL 1020	1.Recognize and apply disciplinary perspectives and methods. 2. Recognize and apply diverse global, social, ethical, and cultural perspectives. 3. Engage in observation and hypothesis-making and testing. 4. Analyze and Apply Multimodal Communication Genres, Modes & Formats. 5. Engage in critical and creative thinking and action in a range of contexts. 6. Perform accurate calculations, to translate between representations, and to draw meaningful insight from them. 7. Interpret and apply non-quantitative forms of data, such as visual and qualitative data. 8. Address and solve complex problems collaboratively.		

Summary

The reimagined CU Denver core brings educational cohesiveness, flexibility, and purpose to the curriculum. By linking disciplinary learning to durable skills and ethical engagement, the curriculum would foster graduates who can think critically, communicate effectively, and act responsibly within an increasingly interconnected world.