

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

When Wheaton's faculty approved Christ at the Core (CATC) in November 2014, we committed to a new general education curriculum – started in Fall 2016 – and a full curricular review after six full years. In 2022-23, the CATC Review Task Force examined the curriculum to ensure its future success for students, faculty, and the college. We collected input from faculty and deans and reviewed available data. Having carefully considered all received feedback, we present data regarding CATC and our recommendations to the faculty for improving CATC. With these changes for faculty to consider, we look forward to a vibrant CATC program for years to come.

### **Successes of Christ at the Core:**

Christ at the Core refreshed general education by involving all divisions and departments in a Christ-centered liberal arts curriculum. The courses and name reflect our continued commitment to Christ and His Kingdom. Faculty across the college successfully developed and taught shared, thematic, and competency courses. Students largely met the learning outcomes.

### **Changes affecting Christ at the Core:**

Three significant developments inform – but do not limit - our recommendations. First, Wheaton now has fewer undergraduates and fewer faculty. This affects how many CATC hours are needed and what faculty can offer. The faculty changes include the cut of five visiting lines created for Fall 2016 to help departments contribute to CATC. Second, the Dean of Humanities and Theological Studies will oversee CATC starting in 2023-24 and work closely with a CATC Faculty Director. Third, the Humanities have provided a growing percentage of FYS sections.

### **Recommended changes:**

Given the ways CATC has served our campus well, our recommendations address particular issues and seek efficiencies through creative solutions. We recommend:

1. FYS caps increase from 18 to 21, reducing the number of sections to fit current resources.
2. To inspire creating and offering AIS courses, AISs can count for major credit. They need to be at the 300 level, open to all students, and have one, preferably two, thematic tags.
3. To ensure enough student seats and a sustainable faculty workload, SIP and Competencies faculty will develop a plan in 2023-24 to offer enough sections for the next five years.
4. Create Core 131 Holistic Human Flourishing as a 1 credit Passage course. Faculty deliberation of this course involves working through faculty governance (#7 below).
5. Form a working group of interested First Year Seminar (FYS) faculty to examine common and recommended readings for FYS with an eye on refreshing the selections.
6. Adopting a new CATC review cycle through 2029-30.
7. CATC changes and decisions follow the protocol developed by Curriculum Committee and the CATC Review Task Force this year.
8. Robust financial support of CATC training, teaching, and continued innovation.
9. Contributions to CATC factor into decisions about departments and programs, faculty lines, and the hiring, promotion, and tenure of faculty.
10. Supporting a CATC Faculty Director, serving under the Dean of Humanities and Theological Studies, as a rotating position (3 yr term) with 12 hours of annual release time.

## A. Reviewing Christ at the Core So Far

### 1. The CATC Review Task Force at Work in 2022-23

To complete the review cycle adopted at the creation of Christ at the Core, the CATC Review Task Force met throughout the 2022-2023 academic year. The group that met throughout the year included representatives from different divisions and faculty committees. The Task Force included: Sarah Borden, Stephanie Gates, Scott Ickes, David Lauber, Michael McKoy, Sarah Miglio, Brian Miller (Chair), Matthew Milliner, Cathy Troupos, and Ben Weber. We are grateful to Phyllis Howell for her work with the Task Force throughout the year.

As part of our review, we solicited feedback from faculty and academic deans. This included hosting focus groups for faculty in October 2022, the chair collected feedback from a Chairs/Directors' Meeting in December 2022, and we sent surveys to CATC faculty, department chairs, and academic deans in February 2023.

### 2. CATC Student Outcomes and Faculty Feedback

By multiple metrics, the Christ at the Core curriculum begun in Fall 2016 has served Wheaton College well. At its adoption, faculty hoped it would address multiple needs: continuity and coherence, partnerships between general education and majors, innovation and flexibility, shared learning experiences, diversity, faculty ownership, and student ownership.

According to faculty reports at the end of each semester, the vast majority of students meet the learning outcomes in the CATC courses. See the data for the first nine semesters of Christ at the Core as reported by the Research and Evaluation of Student Learning Committee (RESL).

Christ at the Core Foundation Courses (faculty reports % students who met outcome – weighted avg)

	Fa16	Sp17	Fa17	Sp18	Fa18	Sp19	Fa19	Sp20	Fa20
FYS1	92	98.11	93.29	92.86	93.25	88.24	95.36	90.54	95.23
FYS2	91	90.57	91.87	97.62	91.30	96.08	95.10	97.30	96.92
FYS3	93	94.34	92.28	97.62	94.67	94.12	95.36	93.24	95.96
FYS4	91	83.02	91.46	85.71	88.45	86.27	91.75	89.19	94.86
FYS5	91	94.34	90.65	97.62	94.85	96.08	95.36	95.95	95.45
AI1		89.09	92.68	95.70	97.35	93.43	89.71	96.58	94.22
AI2		83.64	92.68	95.70	94.69	97.08	64.71	95.06	95.47
Cap1							92.43	94.29	92.75
Cap2							94.05	98.73	95.37
Cap3							95.14	96.83	95.02
OtLit1	92	90.69	99.62	97.39	96.79	95.47	96.15	98.19	97.38
OtLit2	89	96.10	99.25	96.27	95.87	93.60	94.51	95.31	95.64
OtLit3	90	95.20	99.25	97.01	99.08	96.80	97.80	96.39	97.38
OtLit4	89	95.50	99.25	98.51	98.62	97.07	97.80	96.39	97.67
OtLit5	91	96.40	98.49	98.51	98.62	98.13	96.70	97.11	93.34
NtLit1	96	96.40	96.45	96.15	95.48	96.32	95.64	96.49	96.37
NtLit2	92	95.50	97.46	96.15	96.05	96.32	97.20	95.09	96.67
NtLit3	97	97.75	95.94	94.59	93.79	95.09	98.13	96.49	97.02

NtLit4	94	100	93.91	88.46	95.48	96.93	98.44	95.79	97.68
ChrTh1	92	94.39	97.60	92.73	99.66	98.71	99.28	91.24	97.64
ChrTh2	93	95.02	98.56	95.91	99.66	98.71	98.20	93.07	96.76

-generally high scores (particularly for OTLit, NTLit, ChrTh) – lowest is FYS4

Christ at the Core Tagged Courses (faculty reports % students who met outcome – weighted avg)

	Fa16	Sp17	Fa17	Sp18	Fa18	Sp19	Fa19	Sp20	Fa20
AAQR1	85	88.62	87.12	88.25	82.95	85.33	78.15	93.32	94.77
AAQR2	83	87.13	71.24	90.60	81.50	80.58	82.43	94.28	95.04
AAQR3	84	88.62	83.48	83.97	76.21	83.06	80.63	91.69	96.78
DUS1	92	83.33	93.13	91.30	91.21	94.68	91.55	91.85	89.10
DUS2	93	86.02	92.75	95.17	91.58	94.68	93.92	89.97	89.08
DUS3	91	81.18	85.88	90.82	89.38	83.27	96.28	92.48	91.58
GP1	91	93.51	93.16	91.65	93.69	93.97	96.30	94.55	95.80
GP2	92	94.77	83.73	92.36	92.42	88.94	94.44	94.80	94.66
GP3	92	85.66	93.87	91.89	92.93	91.46	97.41	90.84	94.97
HP1	95	94.88	92.38	90.29	92.82	87.50	95.07	95.88	92.10
HP2	95	94.88	91.58	91.75	93.78	98.06	96.06	93.61	90.06
HP3	96	96.28	94.74	90.78	91.39	97.22	97.04	97.72	95.16
LE1	88	89.43	93.43	92.09	94.44	91.56	97.65	92.56	95.12
LE2	83	91.46	93.43	92.08	93.43	95.78	99.06	96.41	95.08
LE3	94	93.09	90.61	91.89	96.46	94.51	97.65	96.15	95.52
PI1	86	87.29	90.90	90.68	92.75	94.64	93.60	94.42	93.18
PI2	82	86.86	92.51	83.85	88.41	95.24	93.49	93.40	95.35
PI3	88	89.41	90.37	84.47	91.30	92.86	94.28	92.89	96.98
SIP1	100	87.17	91.07	86.89	85.05	87.27	92.76	96.14	93.23
SIP2	95	93.58	94.64	89.94	88.79	92.27	92.76	96.62	91.21
SIP3	100	92.51	92.86	92.68	88.79	89.55	90.13	95.17	94.49
SP1	84	95.65	88.69	92.44	84.54	96.08	86.79	98.76	89.74
SP2	84	86.23	84.10	89.30	88.89	88.24	96.01	96.89	88.65
SP3	86	89.86	80.73	92.51	89.86	96.08	85.54	95.03	86.49
SI1	88	89.27	91.04	91.20	88.82	88.78	89.91	92.59	94.46
SI2	88	89.70	88.32	89.08	89.97	89.76	89.47	86.69	92.62
SI3	90	77.83	90.24	93.66	91.94	94.39	92.98	91.25	94.42
VPAM1	96	97.52	97.60	97.44	98.48	98.20	93.75	95.69	97.72
VPAM2	96	98.58	96.80	96.79	100	95.21	95.83	94.89	98.38
VPAM3	94	97.52	98.40	97.74	100	95.21	95.83	98.04	99.20
VPAT1		100	97.92	93.88	93.75	96.51	94.1	94.92	94.94
VPAT2		87.50	93.75	97.94	96.88	100	100	94.92	98.79
VPAT3		87.50	93.75	95.92	93.75	97.67	91.21	97.46	92.56
VPAV1		94.21	89.58	94.57	90.63	90.85	77.97	94.55	99.38
VPAV2		94.21	94.79	97.67	93.75	91.50	92.37	91.09	99.38
VAPV3		88.84	87.50	95.35	93.75	92.81	85.59	96.04	98.26

-Consistently lower scores: AAQR, SI, SP

Christ at the Core Competency Courses (faculty reports % students who met outcome – weighted avg)

	Fa16	Sp17	Fa17	Sp18	Fa18	Sp19	Fa19	Sp20	Fa20
FLang1	81	97.85							
FLang2	84	59.68							
FLang3	97	89.78							
FLang4	99	94.09							
FLang5	86	91.40							
ALang1				100	94.12		100		86.5
ALang2				100	98.04		81.82		100
ALang3				100	100		100		95.09
ALang4				100	100		93.94		88.61
MLang1				95.12	90.97	98.61	95.88	93.38	93.20
MLang2				84.55	90.97	95.83	96.47	97.79	95.37
MLang3				91.87	95.83	100	99.41	96.32	96.76
MLang4				86.18	90.28	94.44	100	94.85	95.61
MLang5				95.12	91.67	95.83	97.65	98.53	96.66
Comm1		100	96.31	97.58	100	99.53	100	96.79	99.62
Comm2		100	96.31	98.39	100	99.53	100	96.79	98.48
Comm3		100	96.31	84.68	98.93	100	100	97.44	98.05
Comm4		100	96.31	96.58	99.47	100	100	94.23	94.76
Comm5		100	95.39	98.39	100	100	100	95.51	96.76
Well1	95	95.20	96.68	94.02			96.75	95.71	96.33
Well2	81	90.40	95.94	87.18			97.34	95.05	96.33
Well3	93	91.20	96.68	95.73			97.34	95.38	96.98
Writ1	79	89.69	92.92	90.17	96.77	98.16	95.89	94.32	96.55
Writ2	79	89.24	91.59	90.75	96.77	98.16	96.23	93.75	96.55
Writ3	90	87.44	93.36	89.60	96.77	98.16	96.92	93.75	97.08
Writ4	79	89.69	93.81	90.75	97.24	96.93	95.89	94.32	96.55
Writ5	79	89.24	94.25	90.17	96.77	96.93	96.23	94.32	96.55

-Consistently high scores across all categories (makes some sense given that these are competencies)

The system has helped provide flexibility for students as they meet their degree requirements. Compared to the previous distribution model general education system, students now have more options across different disciplines by which they can meet requirements. Additionally, the AIS and Capstone courses and their learning outcomes offer opportunities for students to build on their learning in shared core, thematic, and competency courses.

In focus groups conducted by RESL and the CATC Task Force and survey data collected by the Task Force this year, faculty generally report that Christ at the Core has worked well. Faculty and programs have largely stepped up to develop and teach courses. Faculty committees have successfully overseen and guided Christ at the Core. The learning outcomes-based approach of CATC has helped assessment for CATC courses as well as has enabled the mapping of the 12 Christ at the Core outcomes to the 5 Institutional Learning Outcomes approved by faculty in Spring 2022.

The biggest concerns we heard from faculty have less to do with student learning and more to do with two areas. First, the budget cuts in recent years increase the difficulty and complexity in staffing Christ at the Core courses. As faculty desire to both equip students in their majors and

other programs as well as contribute to Christ at the Core, there are fewer resources all around to devote to both commitments. Faculty expressed concern at the adoption of Christ at the Core about adequate resourcing and some of the resources that had been made available, such as the five visiting lines departments held to provide more FYS and AIS sections, are no longer available. Some of the faculty line cuts announced in 2022-23 hit departments who had committed significant hours to Christ at the Core.

Second, faculty express concerns about certain pressure points in Christ at the Core that hamper student and faculty engagement. Certain courses, such as FYS and AIS, present both opportunities and challenges for instructors given their requirements and desired outcomes. The tag system can encourage students to be savvy with the courses they select to meet requirements quickly, which can encourage a checklist mentality. This system offers advantages to double-tagged courses but can limit exploration of the liberal arts.

Since CATC began, the college has marketed the “Christ at the Core” program. The name and curriculum match well with the college’s larger goals and mission. Since the beginning of CATC, multiple other Christian colleges have looked to Wheaton’s model as they considered their own general education programs.

Because of these generally positive outcomes and feedback, we do not believe Christ at the Core needs significant overhaul or changes. The curricular structure largely works. The faculty have demonstrated buy-in and effectively taught courses. Our students have been well-served. Given the good that has come out of Christ at the Core, our recommendations are more in line with finding efficiencies and creative solutions to sticking points.

### 3. Reviewing Christ at the Core

When approving Christ at the Core in November 2014, the full faculty committed to a review process intended to help keep CATC on track in the coming years. At the time, faculty expressed concerns about training faculty to contribute to CATC offerings, avoiding curricular drift across CATC courses, and working through faculty governance.

This process included review of all the courses in the tags, competencies, and shared core. For each set of courses, Curriculum Committee undertook the review of syllabi and the Research and Evaluation of Student Learning Committee conducted focus groups with faculty teaching those courses. This initial review cycle ends with the work of the Review Task Force in 2022-2023. See the following table for more details on the initial review cycle:

	General Education Assessment Schedule						
	2016-17	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
<b>Thematic Core</b>							
Applied Abstract & Quantitative Reasoning						✓	
Diversity in the United States			✓				
Global Perspectives			✓				
Historical Perspectives						✓	
Literary Explorations					✓		
Philosophical Inquiry					✓		
Scientific Issues & Perspectives					✓		
Scientific Practice			✓				
Social Inquiry					✓		
Visual & Performing Arts				✓			
<b>Shared Core</b>							
First Year Seminar				✓			
Advanced Seminar					✓		
Old Testament				✓			
New Testament				✓			
Christian Thought				✓			
Senior Capstone Experience						✓	
<b>Core Competencies</b>							
Foreign Language			✓				
Oral Communication						✓	
Wellness			✓				
Writing						✓	
Comprehensive Review of CATC program and assessment plan							✓

#### 4. CATC Course Offerings by Shared Core, Tags, and Competencies

We collected data on the number of course sections offered each semester for CATC shared core, tags, and competency courses. See the following table.

	F16	Sp17	Su17	F17	Sp18	Su18	F18	Sp19	Su19	F19	Sp20	Su20	F20	Sp21	Su21	F21	Sp22	Su22	F22
<b>FYS</b>	35	3		35	4		38	4		45	4		33	5		31	4		29
<b>AIS</b>	0	7	1	5	13	2	7	15		6	17	4	8	20	3	7	14	5	6
<b>OT</b>	9	9	2	9		1	6	10		6	8	1	8	8	1	7	7	1	8
<b>NT</b>	8	8	3	9		4	7	7		9	7	2	8	7	2	7	1	3	8
<b>CT</b>	8	10	2	8		4	9	10		9	9	3	10	10	2	10	9	3	9
<b>AAQR</b>	11	14	1	13		1	11	13		9	14		17	11		11	13		12
<b>DUS</b>	9	9		11		2	13	13		16	13	2	17	19	3	23	20	4	18
<b>GP</b>	19	20	4	21		4	20	15		24	22		29	25	2	29	27	7*	26
<b>HP</b>	9	12	2	13		2	14	14		15	14	1	17	14	2	16	20	3	19
<b>LE</b>	11	12	1	17		1	13	19		13	19	1	18	24	1	16	23	2	18
<b>PI</b>	11	13	1	16		3	18	15		18	16	3	22	19	3	22	14	1	20
<b>SIP</b>	1	8	1	7		1	7	17		12*	13	3	11*	13	3	11*	10	3	14*
<b>SP</b>	9	4	4	9		1	10	4		11**	6**	2	13***	7***	4	13***	5**	2	9**
<b>SI</b>	25*	31	4	28**		1	35***	27		29**	23	1	30**	23	1	30**	24	3*	31**

<b>VPA</b>	0	0	1		0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
<b>VPAV</b>	8	8	1	11	2	3	14	13	17	1	12	16	1	15	21	2	17
<b>VPAM</b>	7	11	10		2*	12	11	9	15		11	13		11	11		9
<b>VPAT</b>	0	1	2			3	3	4	5		4	4		5	3		3
<b>First-year</b>																	
<b>Writing</b>	8	13		13		11	14	17	12		11	8		11	9		11
<b>Oral</b>																	
<b>Comm</b>	15	16		13		15	15	15	13		15	16		16	15		13
<b>Wellness</b>	10	7		10				9	9		10	9		6	9		6
<b>Language</b>	15	22		16		21	8	14	8		15	8		17	9		13
*Each asterisk represents a cross-listed course																	

Here are several noteworthy patterns we found in this table:

- FYS: the number of sections has dropped in recent years with a decline in undergraduate student enrollment. The course requires significant faculty investments in the Fall semester.
- AIS: there are always more sections in the Spring semester, often double or more. This is likely due to the faculty hours devoted to FYS in the Fall.
- OT/NT/CT, AAQR, DUS, GP, HP, LE, PI, SIP, SP, SI, VPAs, Writing, Oral Comm, Language: the number of course offers are relatively consistent across years.
- The SI tag has the most courses offered each year compared to all of the other tags.
- There are not many cross-listed courses, but the SIP, SP, and SI tags are more likely to have such courses.

Additional analysis conducted by Melissa Harkrider, Associate Professor of History, shows the shift toward the Humanities offering more sections of FYS. Here is the number of FYS sections offered by each division between 2016 and 2023 and the percent of the total FYS sections offered by that division:

Year	BITH	CAC	CORE	Hum	MML	Nat Sci	Psych	Soc Sci	Total
2016-2017	4 10.5%	5 13.1%	0 0%	10 26.3%	3 7.8%	8 21.0%	5 13.1%	3 7.8%	<b>38</b>
2017-2018	5 12.8%	4 10.2%	0 0%	12 30.7%	2 5.2%	7 17.9%	6 15.3%	3 7.6%	<b>39</b>
2018-2019	5 12.5%	1 2.5%	0 0%	15 37.7%	2 5.0%	7 17.5%	6 15.0%	4 10.0%	<b>40</b>
2019-2020	6 15.3%	4 10.2%	1 2.5%	12 30.7%	1 2.5%	7 17.9%	5 12.8%	3 7.6%	<b>39</b>
2020-2021	5 13.1%	1 2.6%	2 5.2%	15 39.4%	4 10.5%	3 7.8%	4 10.5%	4 10.5%	<b>38</b>
2021-2022	4 11.4%	0 0%	2 5.7%	16 45.7%	3 8.5%	2 5.7%	5 14.2%	3 8.5%	<b>35</b>
2022-2023	3 9.3%	1 3.1%	1 3.1%	18 56.2%	4 12.5%	1 3.1%	2 6.2%	2 6.2%	<b>32</b>
Fall 2023 (planned)	4 16.7%	2 8.3%	0 0%	12 50%	2 8.3%	0 0%	3 12.5%	2 8.3%	<b>24</b>

Similarly, certain departments have taught more FYS sections than others. These are the top seven departments in offering FYS sections between Fall 2016 and Spring 2023: English (44), Psychology (33), BITH (32), Philosophy (28), Christian Formation and Ministry (19), Geology (16), and History (14). Five departments have not offered FYS sections during this time. In all, 65 different faculty members from 17 different departments taught FYS sections.

The analysis of AIS sections by division shows a similar pattern (though not to the same degree as the FYS courses). In terms of sections and faculty, the Humanities have offered more sections over time.

#### AIS by faculty (each faculty receives 1)

Year	BITH	CAC	CORE	Hum	MML	Nat Sci	Psych	Soc Sci	Total
2016-2017	1 10%	2 20%	0 0%	3 30%	0 0%	2 20%	1 10%	1 10%	<b>10</b>
2017-2018	3 12%	4 15%	0 0%	7 27%	2 8%	7 27%	2 8%	1 4%	<b>26</b>
2018-2019	3 9%	5 16%	0 0%	10 31%	1 3%	10 31%	2 6%	1 3%	<b>32</b>
2019-2020	1 3%	7 21%	0 0%	12 36%	1 3%	8 24%	2 6%	2 6%	<b>33</b>
2020-2021	2 5%	7 18%	1 3%	13 34%	2 5%	7 18%	2 5%	4 11%	<b>38</b>
2021-2022	1 3%	6 18%	0 0%	11 33%	4 12%	5 15%	1 3%	5 15%	<b>33</b>
2022-2023	2 6%	6 19%	1 3%	12 38%	1 3%	2 6%	3 9%	5 16%	<b>32</b>

#### AIS sections (team-teaching faculty each receive .5)

Year	BITH	CAC	CORE	Hum	MML	Nat Sci	Psych	Soc Sci	Total
2016-2017	0.5 6%	1.5 19%	0 0%	2 25%	0 0%	2 25%	1 13%	1 13%	<b>8</b>
2017-2018	2 11%	2.5 13%	0 0%	4.5 24%	1.5 8%	6 32%	2 11%	0.5 3%	<b>19</b>
2018-2019	2 8%	3 12%	0 0%	7.5 30%	0.5 2%	9 36%	2 8%	1 4%	<b>25</b>
2019-2020	1 4%	4.5 17%	0 0%	10 38%	0.5 2%	6.5 25%	2 8%	1.5 6%	<b>26</b>
2020-2021	1.5 5%	4.5 15%	1 3%	10.5 34%	1.5 5%	6 19%	2 6%	4 13%	<b>31</b>
2021-2022	1 4%	4.5 17%	0 0%	8.5 33%	2.5 10%	4 15%	1 4%	4.5 17%	<b>26</b>
2022-2023	1.5 6%	4 15%	1 4%	9.5 37%	0.5 2%	1.5 6%	3 12%	5 19%	<b>26</b>



## 5. Student Enrollment and Faculty Decreases

Since the beginning of Christ at the Core, both the number of undergraduate students and full-time faculty at Wheaton College have dropped.

Going into Fall 2023, the college is aiming for 500 new first-year students and 50 transfer students. According to the Annual Academic Assessment 2016-17, the first full year of Christ at the Core, Wheaton enrolled 588 freshmen and 49 transfers. In the five years before 2016-17, Wheaton had 597-607 freshmen and 60-67 transfers each year. This decrease in students affects the number of CATC courses needed each year.

In the last few years plus through the next few years, Wheaton will have lost dozens of full-time faculty. In 2016-17, Wheaton had 204.82 FTE of instructional load, the highest recorded from 2001-02 onward. The faculty reductions have happened in multiple ways: through voluntary retirements, unfilled positions after faculty left, the elimination of five of the five CATC faculty positions (BTS NT, CFM, English, Psych, Soc/Anthro), and the announcement in Fall 2022 of cut faculty lines. These reductions affect the ability of faculty and departments to offer CATC courses.

## 6. Changed Oversight of CATC starting in 2023-24

From its inception, Christ at the Core has been overseen by the Assistant Provost working under the Provost. In the coming academic year, this is changing after the restructuring of administrators in Academic Affairs. The Dean of Humanities and Theologies Studies will assume oversight of CATC and work with a newly appointed CATC Faculty Director. The Dean and Faculty Director will work together to address CATC matters including training faculty, offering sufficient sections for students, budgeting, interacting with other offices on campus, and events on campus.

## **B. Recommendations for Christ at the Core in the Future**

### **1. Raising Caps for FYS (and not raising them for AIS)**

Based on survey data, it is clear that faculty (a) value FYS, (b) want to maintain FYS as central to our general education curriculum, and (c) would like to continue teaching FYS courses when and as they can. There are complications to raising the cap for FYS, but it is highly preferable to raise the cap rather than eliminating or fundamentally altering the structure of the course.

In keeping with the vision for these courses and in light of the current personnel limits, we make the following recommendations:

- (i) We recommend that allowance be made for raising the cap for FYS at the discretion of the Dean of the Humanities and Theological Studies. This will provide the option of raising the FYS cap if so needed to ensure even enrollment among the courses. This will eliminate the need for multiple FYS sections each year compared to previous years. We suggest that such raising be done minimally in order to preserve the seminar-nature of the FYS. Furthermore, in order to maintain the nature of the course as a seminar and in order to be faithful to the guiding vision of the CATC faculty-approved documents, the FYS cap should not be raised above 21.
- (ii) Among the more marked concerns among faculty with raising the cap for FYS was losing the seminar aspect of the course. A simple but necessary way to help address this in years when the cap might be raised would be to ensure that there are appropriate spaces for genuine seminar discussions. We strongly recommend that, if and when the cap is raised, significant effort is made to find (or create) appropriate spaces on campus for a seminar set-up for these larger sections of FYS. Regular classrooms arranged with chairs in rows is not conducive to seminar-style discussions.

We do not recommend raising the cap for AIS courses. While the Dean of the Humanities and Theological Studies has the prerogative to raise the caps in a time of need, we do not recommend raising the cap at this time for several reasons:

- (i) Survey results show that the majority of faculty value the role of AIS in the CATC curriculum; however, those who teach the course stated overwhelmingly that raising the cap would have negative implications, most markedly a dramatic increase in the amount of grading time and/or a consequent reduction in the quality of feedback as AIS courses incorporate major, research-intensive, integrative assignments.
- (ii) There is currently no evidence that more AIS seats are needed for the 2023-24 academic year.
- (iii) Finally, raising the caps pre-emptively may lead to an uneven distribution of students leading to an unequal distribution of labor for faculty teaching these courses.

## 2. AIS Courses Can also Count for Major Credit

After thoroughly reviewing all received responses from chairs and deans to our queries, we recommend renewing our commitment to the AIS by expanding it to count for major credit, which has hitherto been disallowed. The tag system eliminated departmental monopolies over specific thematic learning outcomes, and refusing to allow departments to count AIS (and the accompanying tags) toward a major seems a holdover from the era of departmental topic control. Allowing faculty to offer AIS-tagged courses that will count towards their departmental majors will free faculty from the dilemma of having to choose their departmental requirements over CATC contributions.

Courses that could receive the AIS tag and count towards major requirements must be:

- (i) At the 300 level and meet the Learning Outcomes for AIS courses, as determined by the Curriculum Committee.
- (ii) Accessible to non-majors and not include requirements exclusive to that major.
- (iii) A non-required elective for the major, allowing students the option of taking another AIS course to fulfill the CATC requirement if they so choose.
- (iv) Have at least one tag, preferably two (following the practice of existing AIS courses).

The AIS is a bellwether for Wheaton's curricular coherence. It represents our refusal to atomize into an assortment of specialized departments and scholars. We do not consider this expansion to be a departure from the original CATC ideals, but to be more consistent with them. Rather than either dropping the AIS requirement or mandating it for divisions, departments, or individual faculty, it is time to rediscover the joy of the AIS, facilitate new faculty partnerships, and ensure that our commitment to interdisciplinarity in Christ continues, for "in him all things hold together" (Col. 1:17). Faculty have both an opportunity to contribute to AIS offerings and a responsibility to providing these courses which help develop students from their First Year Seminar to their Capstone course. It is time to double-down on the AIS as a unique signature of our Christ-centered curriculum, and allowing it to count for major credit increases flexibility to facilitate college-wide buy-in which is increasingly necessary for CATC's success.

## 3. Addressing Sections and Seats in SIP and Competencies: Plans Needed in 2023-24

### *SIP: Curricular/pedagogical issues*

We are, for now, not recommending broadening SIP to include social phenomena, despite suggestions from some faculty to do so. We would like to give Natural Science faculty a one-year opportunity (Fall 2023 and Spring 2024 course schedules) to sufficiently staff needed SIP seats and develop a 5-year plan to address our SIP needs. The Dean of Humanities and Theological Studies (overseeing CATC) and the Director of Academic Advising will work together to provide the Natural Science departments with the current seat numbers needed for SIP-tagged classes along with projected needs. The Dean of Natural Sciences will work with the Natural Science departments in the development of a 5-year plan for SIP courses (by January 2024) that either explains how they can address these needs or allow for alternative ideas for SIP's future. If Natural Science departments are unable to sufficiently meet the SIP course needs, we recommend the SIP advisory document be revised to include "human" or "social"

phenomena with input from Natural Science, Social Science, Humanities and Theological Studies, and Conservatory, Arts, and Communication representation.

*SIP: Administrative coordination and resourcing*

We recommend that the Dean of Humanities and Theological Studies (overseeing CATC) coordinate with Director of Academic Advising regarding the needed SIP seats annually, then work with the Provost and Natural Science Dean to identify reasonable course capacities for existing SIP courses and to ensure sufficient quota of SIP tagged courses offered by the Natural Science division. (This would include determining curricular efficiencies, so that Natural Science faculty effort includes SIP.)

*Competencies*

Given the different needs of the competencies – Writing, Oral Communication, Language – we make these recommendations for faculty. These generally could help programs reduce the number of sections they need to offer each Fall and Spring semester. For all competencies: we ask those affiliated faculty to work with the Dean of Humanities and Theological Studies (overseeing CATC) and the Director of Academic Advising to obtain the number of student seats needed. Then, faculty in 2023-2024 will develop a viable plan for the next 5 years that serves students well and provides enough seats, is manageable and sustainable for the affiliated departments, and identifies staffing and resources to make it feasible.

Below, we identify several possibilities that could be helpful for departments to consider regarding pressures to offer sections in the Fall and Spring semesters.

- (i) We suggest a May-June term for Languages/Writing/Oral Communication. Span 103 or 201, in particular, could be offered in such a term. Writing might be less doable given the amount of feedback needed for students; caps might need to be reduced to 15 for these sections. This option would be particularly advantageous for students in programs that offer less curricular flexibility such as Secondary Education, Engineering, and the Conservatory. Faculty with children may not be able to go to Honey Rock or participate in Wheaton In programs, but they could teach these courses on campus. This could generate additional revenue. The possibility of team teaching some of these summer sections could help lighten the faculty workload and the money could be split between those team teaching a course.
- (ii) Provide a list of topics for competency courses, and instead of courses that simply meet the competency, we could provide themed courses that include these topics. This could help attract students and faculty. (We realize this might also limit teaching flexibility.)
- (iii) Experimenting with a writing enabled FYS course. The English Department indicated a willingness to explore introducing a middle tier for students to address writing needs. (Some students need a full 4-hour writing course and others test out; this recommendation is concerned with the middle tier.). These FYS sections would still have topics but be writing-enhanced. In Fall 2023, English faculty will offer 6 FYS sections; 2-4 could be writing courses where students meet both the FYS and Writing requirements. We propose that the English Department would help set guidelines for who could take

these FYS courses, set curriculum for the course, and provide input on caps for these courses.

- (iv) Language options to consider: In MCL, Spanish has the highest enrollment compared to other language sections and has lost two lines through the ARC process. Currently, Span 101 is open enrollment while students need to test into 103/201/331. Students could be required to test in to Span 101 to demonstrate that they are true beginners to avoid overqualified students enrolling in the course. All language sections, and particularly Spanish, can consider creative ways to utilize what faculty they have left, adjusting major requirements, and cutting course sections or raising caps where possible.

#### 4. Wellness in Drafted Core 131 Holistic Human Flourishing Course

We recommend the creation of a proposed Core 131 Human Holistic Flourishing course (1 credit) as developed by a task force in the Spring 2023 semester. We commend the work done by the task force. The areas this proposed course would address – physical, emotional, spiritual, and relational health and practices – will benefit students and ensure CATC includes a wellness component. That the course would be tied to Passage could help set up students to address these important areas at the beginning of and then throughout their time at Wheaton.

We recognize that there is ongoing work regarding the proposed course. Our task force had questions regarding the appropriate number of pages of reading for the course, whether the scope of the learning outcomes could be narrowed, securing the staffing for the course and training for the faculty involved, financial sustainability, and the ability of instructors to sensitively handle the topics of the course with students. Revised versions of the documents developed by the Core 131 Holistic Human Flourishing task force should go through appropriate faculty governance processes for deliberation. See Recommendation #7 below.

#### 5. FYS Faculty Examine Readings for the Course

During the review process, multiple First Year Seminar faculty expressed an interest in examining and updating the common and supplementary readings for the different sections of the course. These readings were developed before the start of Christ at the Core in Fall 2016. A faculty task force could draw on expertise across disciplines and divisions to provide FYS faculty with readings that reflect the best Christian thinking available which shapes new students on a variety of topics.

Additionally, such a group could advise the Dean of Humanities and Theological studies and the CATC Faculty Director regarding the amount of reading assigned to FYS students. From the development of this course, the number of pages has been a concern as students transition to college and to the big questions the FYS course poses. Additionally, the group could help find texts with accessible e-versions so that more students can easily engage the readings.

#### 6. A New CATC Review Cycle through 2029-2030

We have a recommended timeline for the next review cycle of Christ at the Core. We propose this timeline with these factors in mind: the Curriculum Committee largely found faculty have adhered to the learning outcomes well; RESL found positive feedback from faculty teaching

within different CATC categories; we have lost important people involved in the first cycle, including the Assistant Provost, administrative support, and faculty, making it difficult to fill out all of the positions on Curriculum Committee; regular review and renewal of courses helps faculty at all levels pursue CATC outcomes and goals; and Curriculum Committee has much work to do each year, in addition to reviewing Christ at the Core courses. Curriculum Committee reviewed this timeline in Spring 2023 and found it agreeable.

2023-2024: no CATC review as (1) departments and programs make curricular decisions based on significant faculty staffing changes due to budget cuts and (2) Curriculum Committee and the full faculty act on the recommendations from the CATC Review Task Force.

2024-2025: DUS, GP, SP, Foreign Language

2025-2026: VPA, OT, NT, CT

2026-2027: Wellness new form?, LE, PI, AIS

2027-2028: FYS, SIP, SI, Capstone

2028-2029: AAQR, HP, Oral Communication, Writing

2029-2030: Comprehensive review of CATC program and assessment plan

This plan, along with new possible ways for Curriculum Committee to review courses such as in a 1-2 day meeting in May or June, will help Curriculum Committee and RESL continue to provide needed faculty oversight over Christ at the Core.

## 7. Faculty Governance Processes for CATC Changes

According to the Faculty Handbook, the faculty of Wheaton College have the “primary responsibility for the design and implementation of curriculum” as outlined in the Faculty Handbook (3.1.5). The Curriculum Committee is the faculty governance committee “responsible for initiating and/or considering curricular changes, adopting curricular changes, reviewing and renewing courses in the core curriculum, and determining degree requirements for the College’s undergraduate programs and its core curriculum.” (3.5.3) The current version of the Curriculum Committee was formed through faculty governance in 2014 as EPCC, addressing education policies and curriculum, was split into two: Curriculum Committee and Academic Policies Committee. This academic year – 2022-2023 – and yet-to-be-determined future years involve the work of the Christ at the Core Review Task Force as delineated in CATC review cycles. The CATC Review Task Force is charged with considering all of Christ at the Core in order to set CATC up for success in the years to come. Since the Task Force is not present all years, CATC revisions would otherwise go through Curriculum Committee. We affirm the Curriculum Committee’s traditional commitment to the collaborative exercise of its governance over the CATC curriculum. While collaboration can mean different things in different circumstances, the four principles in this motion describe our practices.

Based on this, the Curriculum Committee and the Christ at the Core Review Task Force affirm these four principles for their work involving curricular processes, specifically addressing the Christ at the Core curriculum.

- (i) Changes to Christ at the Core (CATC) during the 2022-2023 academic year will be taken up by the Christ at the Core Review Task Force. The task force is considering all aspects

of Christ at the Core as part of the assessment cycle for CATC. This cycle was set out in the assessment documents the full faculty approved as part of approving Christ at the Core in 2014. In order to make their recommendations at the end of the Spring 2023 semester, the task force will consider the elements of CATC both individually and as a cohesive program. The task force will exercise judicious, evidence-based governance review. The review team's recommendations will allow the full faculty to consider the big picture regarding CATC, weigh the benefits and disadvantages to proposals and plans involving CATC to be considered through faculty governance starting in Fall 2023, and plan for future curriculum.

- (ii) In years without a CATC review task force (we anticipate this to be most years with CATC review groups operating in a future timeline of CATC review to be recommended by this year's CATC review task force), changes to the essential architecture of Christ at the Core, especially the addition or subtraction of whole requirements or required credits, involve these steps from Curriculum Committee: (a) study by an ad-hoc task force convened by the Curriculum Committee; (b) task force recommendations considered by Curriculum Committee; (c) a positive vote from Curriculum Committee leads to the full consideration and vote by the full faculty. This process allows for the fullest opportunity for consultation with relevant campus stakeholders and reflections upon the probable consequences of a major decision.
- (iii) In years without a CATC review task force, changes to CATC learning outcomes and advisory documents involve these steps from Curriculum Committee: (a) study by an ad-hoc task force convened by the Curriculum Committee; (b) task force recommendations considered by Curriculum Committee; (c) a positive vote from Curriculum Committee leads to the full consideration and vote by the full faculty in the instance of a recommended change to the advisory documents.
- (iv) In all years, ad-hoc task forces involved in the processes discussed above will include specialists in relevant areas, faculty from across the disciplines and divisions, and members of Curriculum Committee and other relevant standing committees (if applicable). The use of an ad-hoc task force allows for the faculty to balance the best practices and specialist knowledge of specific disciplines with a broader understanding of the College's curriculum alongside faculty capabilities and needs.

Considered by CC 12/12/22 – outcome: approved by vote 12/12/22

Considered by CATC Review Task Force 12/13/22 – outcome: approved by vote 12/13/22

## 8. Robust Financial Support of CATC Training, Teaching, and Continued Innovation

A recurring theme that has emerged in reviewing the CATC program data and faculty data has been the need to rebuild and increase incentivization of faculty teaching CATC courses. A number of factors have led to a significant decrease in available faculty FTE for needed CATC courses such as: reduction in the size of the faculty through VEIP retirements, unfilled resignations, the elimination of five of the five CATC faculty positions (BTS NT, CFM, English, Psych, Soc/Anthro), and the growing perception that faculty lines are protected with high major numbers rather than other variables such as student credit hours.

Past practices to encourage faculty engagement and support of CATC courses included robust New Faculty Orientation sessions on CATC, CATC faculty development seminars (with stipends), curricular resources, funding for unique speakers and learning opportunities in the First Year Seminar and Advanced Integrative Seminar. The large and varied number of faculty who engaged the CATC curriculum early on proved key to its successful implementation and ongoing health of the core. Due to staffing changes and ongoing budgetary pressures, there will be a pronounced decline in the quality and sustainability of the CATC program without renewed faculty engagement and incentivized participation.

We recommend Wheaton College incentivize and support faculty engagement with CATC through commitments to:

- (i) Robust training and orientation for all new faculty on CATC and the commitment to the Christian liberal arts at Wheaton College.
- (ii) Provide ongoing training, faculty development, and support for those teaching CATC courses, especially the First Year Seminar and the Advanced Integrative Seminar, with special attention to equipping faculty with faith and learning integration in the classroom, pedagogy for seminars, and shared CATC content.

These institutional commitments would provide key support needed for a healthy and sustainable liberal arts general education curriculum.

#### 9. Christ at the Core in Decision-making Regarding Faculty Lines and Faculty Hiring, Promotion, and Tenure

Given the importance of Christ at the Core to students, faculty, and the institution, we recommend contributions to Christ at the Core should factor into decision-making involving departments and programs, faculty lines, and individual faculty members. This will help incentivize and reward a high level of faculty contributions to the CATC curriculum.

When considering faculty lines and the needs of departments and programs, CATC contributions should matter. Departments can serve majors and Christ at the Core students. In the switch to Christ at the Core, we have encouraged a market mentality where departments and faculty who seek out tags and other CATC courses can be rewarded with more students. This can conflict with needs and interests departments have in serving students in their programs. We are grateful for the numerous departments on campus who have invested in Christ at the Core, and we want important decisions regarding lines and resources to recognize the service to the campus in offering Christ at the Core classes.

Similarly, Christ at the Core requires an ongoing commitment from faculty to the liberal arts and teaching courses beyond our departments and particular disciplines. For example, Wheaton should include a question of and discussion with undergraduate faculty candidates about how they would anticipate contributing to the teaching of CATC courses. Additionally, regular faculty reporting through annual activity reports and PTR files should include a question about institutional service in teaching CATC courses, with clear indication of the positive impact CATC teaching service will have upon faculty evaluation, promotion, and retention.



While not all faculty need to devote significant efforts to CATC, we need to incentivize faculty participation. Faculty contributions to Christ at the Core should be considered as part of the faculty promotable strengths as it involves teaching, institutional service, and spiritual formation. Clear communication and affirmation of the value of teaching CATC courses alongside major courses can help ensure all Wheaton students have access to the courses needed to graduate.

Academic deans and department chairs can help. They should actively and regularly encourage faculty to contribute CATC courses, including the First Year Seminar and Advanced Integrative Seminar. Faculty new to Wheaton should be encouraged to develop Christ at the Core courses and be provided training that can help them do this. We can better encourage all faculty to see Christ at the Core teaching as part of their responsibilities and an opportunity to teach unique courses consistent with our liberal arts mission. Making opting-in to Christ at the Core participation the norm helps ensure faculty who can and want to provide CATC courses can participate and share with the campus.

#### 10. Supporting a CATC Faculty Director

The Provost engaged the CATC Review Task Force regarding a job description for a Christ at the Core Faculty Director. The Provost invited the Task Force to provide recommendations to a proposed job description and we did so.

This faculty director would work with the Dean of Humanities and Theological Studies and help provide oversight of faculty participation, faculty training, work with academic leaders and standing committees regarding CATC, engage in CATC assessment, monitor budgeting and resources for CATC, collaborate regarding the Core Book and CATC Fall Series, and teach FYS and/or AIS courses each year. This person will help represent faculty interests and perspectives involving CATC to the Dean of Humanities and Theological Studies.

The CATC Faculty Director would serve 3 years with an opportunity to renew for another 3 years. They would receive 12 hours of course release each year; at least 8 of these hours must be used for teaching release.