

Hello,

I cannot make the meeting tonight regarding Stevenson Core, but I would like to offer feedback for consideration.

When I was accepted to UCSC in 1987, I chose Stevenson College as my number one choice of college for several reasons including the core course. Although (then) College 8 and Merrill had themes more consistent with my interests, I wanted to be in a Stevenson's three quarter core course for the foundation on Western Civilization it provided and I was lacking. And I also appreciated the small discussion groups that would lead to a close community of learners. There is something unifying about a course that everyone takes in an atmosphere where so much different kind of learning takes place. When you meet someone who was Stevenson but from a different year, you can have conversations about Machiavelli or Malcolm X. We even passed from year to year a costume that one person wore to the final exam.

I did not think Core was perfect. Not all the sections were equal. Some of the grad students were more focused and capable as teachers. But, that is part of life. Sometimes you have an amazing professor or manager, and sometimes you get someone who's in the wrong profession. This does not lessen the overwhelmingly positive effects of a common core course.

What do you gain by having lectures? You'll use fewer instructors and save some money. While I understand the need to trim budgets, I do not think that reducing the opportunities for people to have frank, intellectual conversations in a safe environment saves us much. Stevenson College has been a bulwark of conversation and community for students for decades. It is a learning community that demands intellectual rigor; the core course provides a safe place for students to flex their intellectual wings.

You'll save some money, but the cost to the ethos of the institution will be much higher.

Best regards,

Gabrielle Mitchell Hedlund (Class of '91)