

# Core Curriculum Student Learning

Stephen F. Austin State University

Online Town Hall for Faculty  
January 12, 2021

# Texas Core Curriculum

- 42 hours (35%) of degree
- Designed to be transferrable
- Initiated by Texas Legislature
- Implemented by Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
- Met by Faculty Trust Model at SFA
- **Requires assessment & reporting**

# Texas Core Curriculum Component Areas

- Communication
- Mathematics
- Life & Physical Sciences
- Language Philosophy & Culture
- Creative Arts
- American History
- Government & Political Science
- Social & Behavioral Sciences

# Texas Core Curriculum Objectives

1. Communication Skills \*
2. Critical Thinking Skills \*
3. Empirical and Quantitative Skills
4. Teamwork
5. Social Responsibility
6. Personal Responsibility

\*Required in every core course

# Chart of Core Objectives by Core Components

Foundational Component Area	SCH	Required Core Objectives			Optional Core Objectives		
		CT	COM	EQS	TW	SR	PR
<b>Communication</b>	6	●	●	○	●	○	●
Courses in this category focus on developing ideas and expressing them clearly, considering the effect of the message, fostering understanding, and building the skills needed to communicate persuasively. Courses involve the command of oral, aural, written, and visual literacy skills that enable people to exchange messages appropriate to the subject, occasion, and audience.							
<b>Mathematics</b>	3	●	●	●	○	○	○
Courses in this category focus on quantitative literacy in logic, patterns, and relationships. Courses involve the understanding of key mathematical concepts and the application of appropriate quantitative tools to everyday experience.							
<b>Life and Physical Sciences</b>	6	●	●	●	●	○	○
Courses in this category focus on describing, explaining, and predicting natural phenomena using the scientific method. Courses involve the understanding of interactions among natural phenomena and the implications of scientific principles on the physical world and on human experiences.							
<b>Language, Philosophy &amp; Culture</b>	3	●	●	○	○	●	●
Courses in this category focus on how ideas, values, beliefs, and other aspects of culture express and affect human experience. Courses involve the exploration of ideas that foster aesthetic and intellectual creation in order to understand the human condition across cultures.							
<b>Creative Arts</b>	3	●	●	○	●	●	○
Courses in this category focus on the appreciation and analysis of creative artifacts and works of the human imagination. Courses involve the synthesis and interpretation of artistic expression and enable critical, creative, and innovative communication about works of art.							
<b>American History</b>	6	●	●	○	○	●	●
Courses in this category focus on the consideration of past events and ideas relative to the United States, with the option of including Texas History for a portion of this component area. Courses involve the interaction among individuals, communities, states, the nation, and the world, considering how these interactions have contributed to the development of the United States and its global role.							
<b>Government/Political Science</b>	6	●	●	○	○	●	●
Courses in this category focus on consideration of the Constitution of the United States and the constitutions of the states, with special emphasis on that of Texas. Courses involve the analysis of governmental institutions, political behavior, civic engagement, and their political and philosophical foundations.							
<b>Social and Behavioral Sciences</b>	3	●	●	●	○	●	○
Courses in this category focus on the application of empirical and scientific methods that contribute to the understanding of what makes us human. Courses involve the exploration of behavior and interactions among individuals, groups, institutions, and events, examining their impact on the individual, society, and culture.							
<b>Component Area Option</b>	6	●	●	○	○	○	○
<p>a. A minimum of 3 SCH must meet the definition and corresponding Core Objectives specified in one of the foundational component areas</p> <p>b. As an option for up to 3 semester credit hours of the Component Area Option, an institution may select course(s) that:</p> <p>(i) Meet(s) the definition specified for one or more of the foundational component areas; and</p> <p>(ii) Include(s) a minimum of three Core Objectives, including Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, and one of the remaining Core Objectives of the institution's choice.</p>							

# Core Courses Mapped to Core Objectives

Student work Collected	CORE OBJECTIVES					
	Critical Thinking	Communication Skills	Empirical & Quantitative Skills	Teamwork	Social Responsibility	Personal Responsibility
	Fall of Odd Years	Fall of Even Years	Spring of Odd Years	Spring of Even Years	Spring of Even Years	Spring of Odd Years
COMPONENT AREAS						
Communication	COM 170; GER 131; POR 131; SPA 131, 132	<b>Written</b> BCM 247; ENG 131, 132, 133H  <b>Written and Visual</b> ENG 273  <b>Oral and Visual</b> COM 111	Optional	COM 215; SPH 172, 272	Optional	FRE 131, 132; GER 132; POR 132
Mathematics	MTH 220	<b>Written and Visual</b> MTH 127, 233	MTH 110, 138, 143	Optional	Optional	Optional
Life and Physical Sciences	GOL 101, 131, 132	<b>Written</b> BIO 123; PHY 241	AGN 110; AST 105; BIO 121, 131, 133, 225, 238; ENV 110; PHY 100, 101, 102, 110, 118, 131, 132, 242	BIO 125; CHE 101, 111, 133, 134	Optional	Optional
Language, Philosophy, & Culture	HIS 151, 161	<b>Written</b> ENG 200, 209, 211, 212, 221, 222, 229, 230, 233H	Optional	Optional	HIS152, 162; ENG 223H	PHI 153, 223
Creative Arts	THR 161, 163	<b>Written</b> ART 280, 281, 282	Optional	MHL 245; MUS 140	DAN 140	Optional
American History	HIS 134	<b>Written</b> HIS 133	Optional	Optional	HIS 134	HIS 133
Government & Political Science	PSC 142	<b>Written and Visual</b> PSC 142	Optional	Optional	PSC 141	PSC 141
Social & Behavioral Science	ECO 231, 232	<b>Written and Visual</b> GEO 131  <b>Written</b> PSY 133	SOC 137	Optional	ANT 231	Optional

# SACSCOC Requires a Core Curriculum

**8.2.b The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results for student learning outcomes for collegiate-level general education competencies of its undergraduate degree programs,**

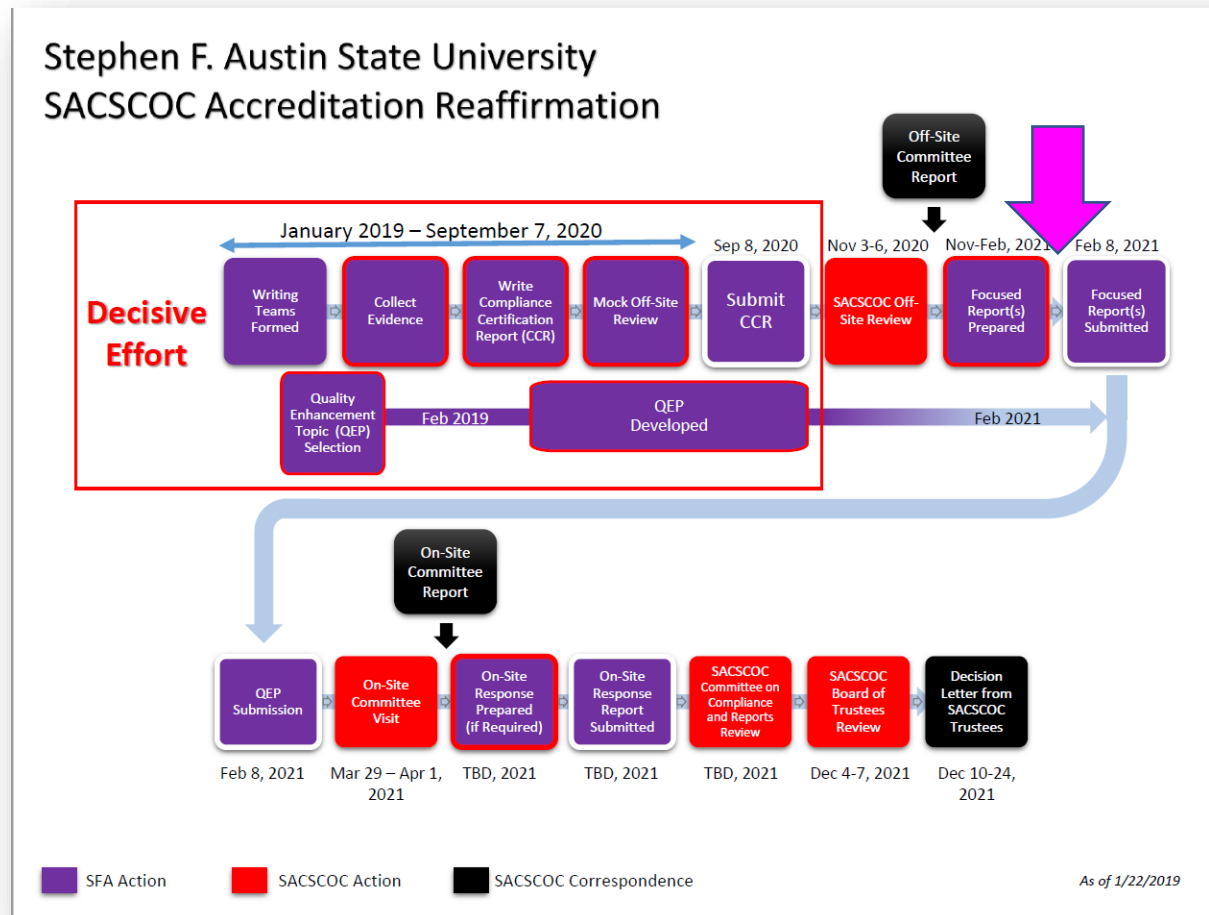
*(Student outcomes: general education)*

# Off-Site Committee Report (Excerpt)

The process for assessment is in place. However, the degree to which assessment evidence is used to seek improvements in learning is unclear. The institution identifies changes in learning resources but does not provide any evidence about how the results were used to improve learning. The institution provides significant detail about how the evidence was used to improve their assessment processes with the Faculty Trust Model. Less information was provided about how the results were used to improve student learning in general education courses.



# SFA's Timeline for Reaffirmation



# Faculty Trust Model

- Approved by Deans Council in December 2019
- Replaces Artifact-Rubric approach
- Requires upper-level instructors to evaluate chosen students
- Unique in the U.S.
- Produces 3 sets of information to compare & consider

# Three Sets of Information

- 1. Upper-level faculty assessments of senior attainment of core objectives**
- 2. Sample student core curriculum course grades in each core objective area**
- 3. Senior Exit Survey results from graduates regarding their perception of core objective attainment**

# Upper-level faculty assessments of seniors

- Graduates from December
- 184 students in sample
- Each student evaluated on all six objectives in Qualtrics
- Data on 133 students
- Time spent was ~150 seconds
- New process

Please enter the four-digit identification code for the student you are assessing.

Please assess this student in each of the Core Objectives. If you were recording a grade in these areas, what do you think it would be?

	F	D	C	B	A	
Communication						<input type="checkbox"/> No Assessment
Critical Thinking						<input type="checkbox"/> No Assessment
Empirical & Quantitative Skill						<input type="checkbox"/> No Assessment
Personal Responsibility						<input type="checkbox"/> No Assessment
Social Responsibility						<input type="checkbox"/> No Assessment
Teamwork						<input type="checkbox"/> No Assessment

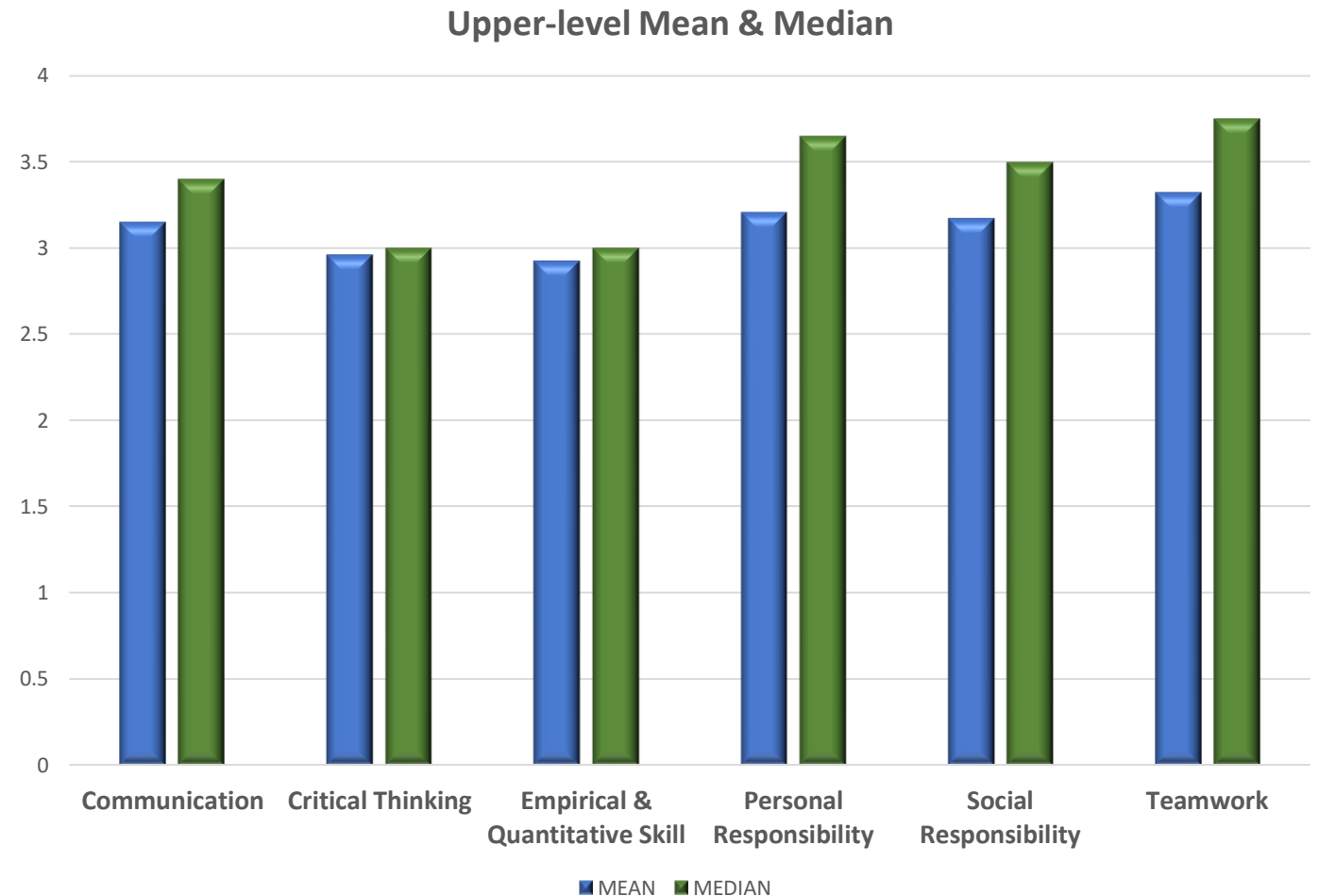
Do you have another student to assess?

☐ Yes

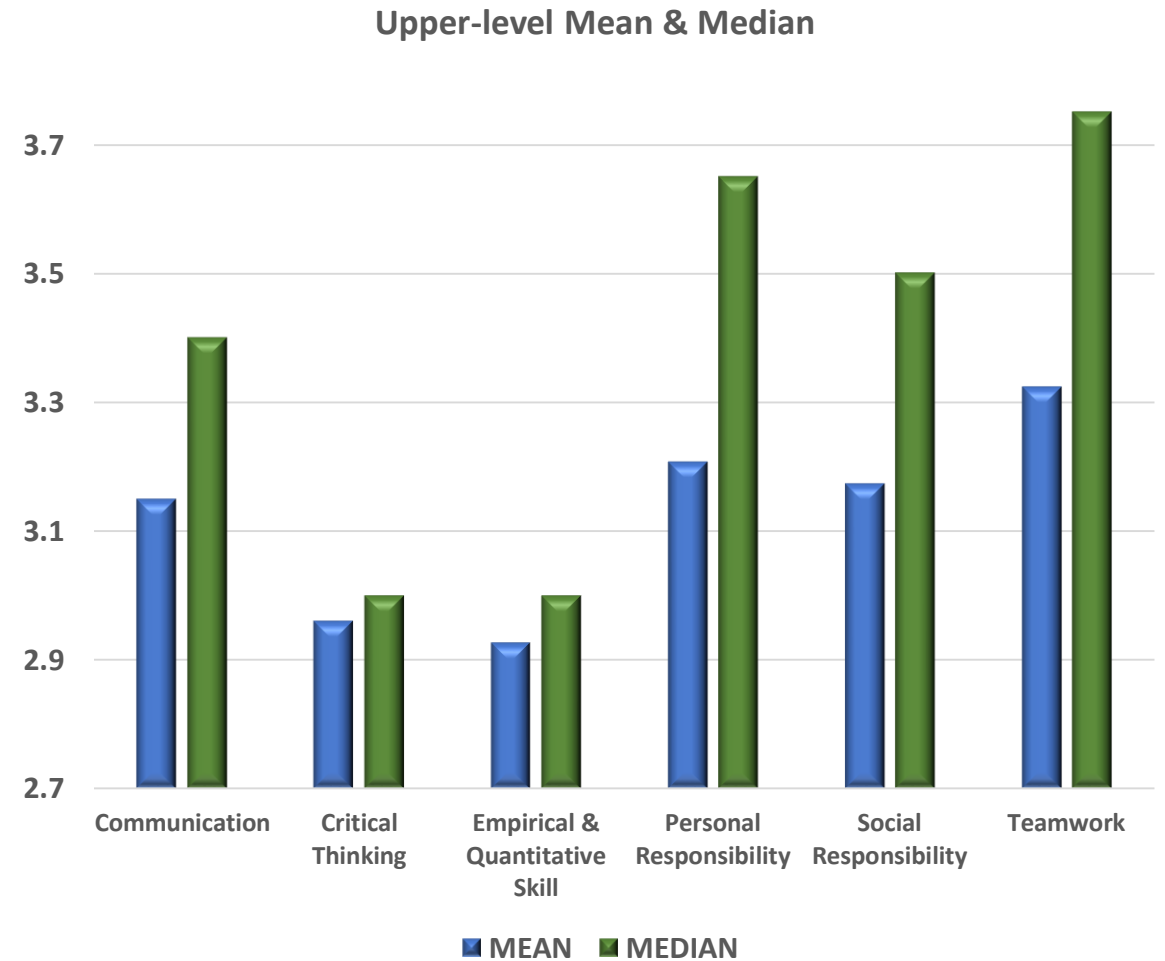
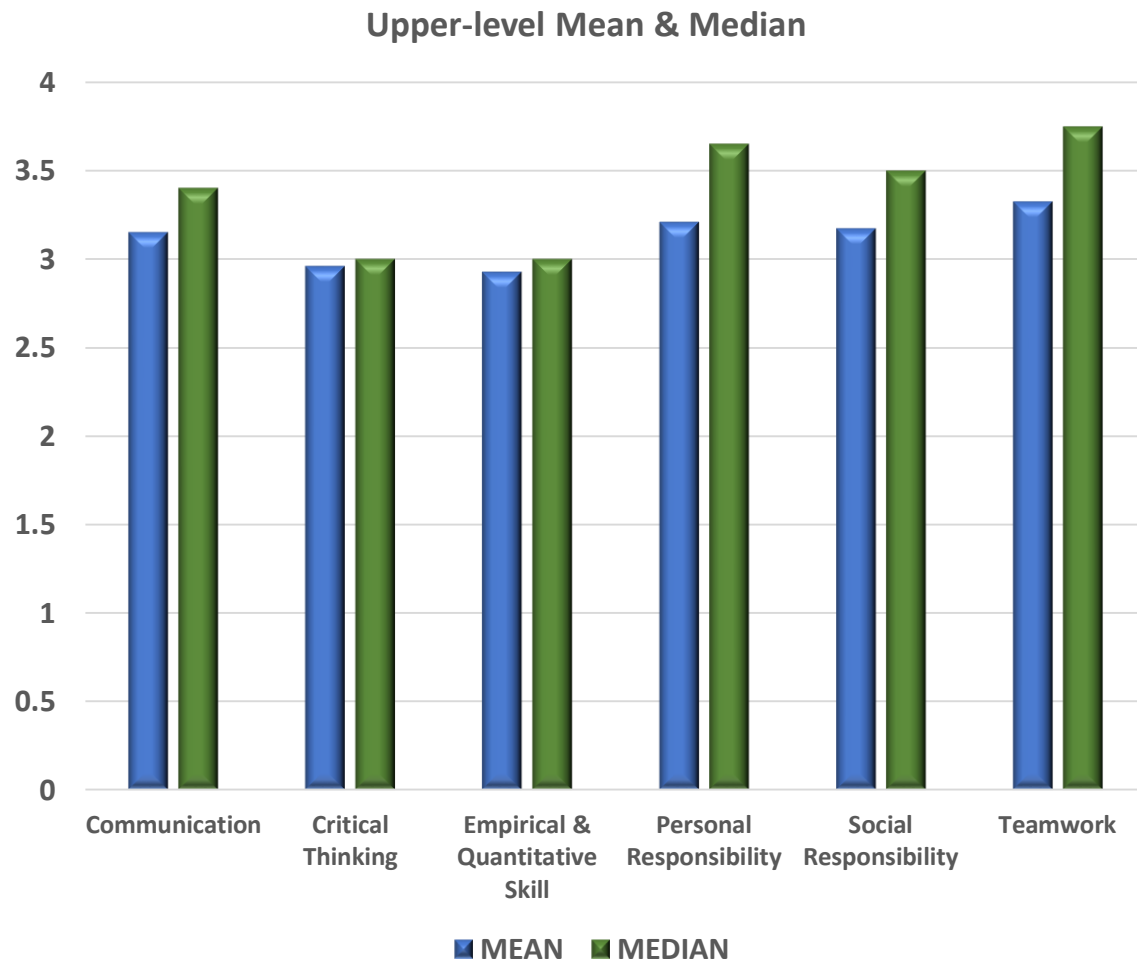
☐ No

# Upper-Level Scores, Strengths/Weaknesses

- Fall 2020 data (recent)
- Unique to the other two sets
- Mean & Median “flow”
- Ordinal data
- One semester



# Scale Adjusted to Illustrate Differences



# Second: Grades in Core Courses

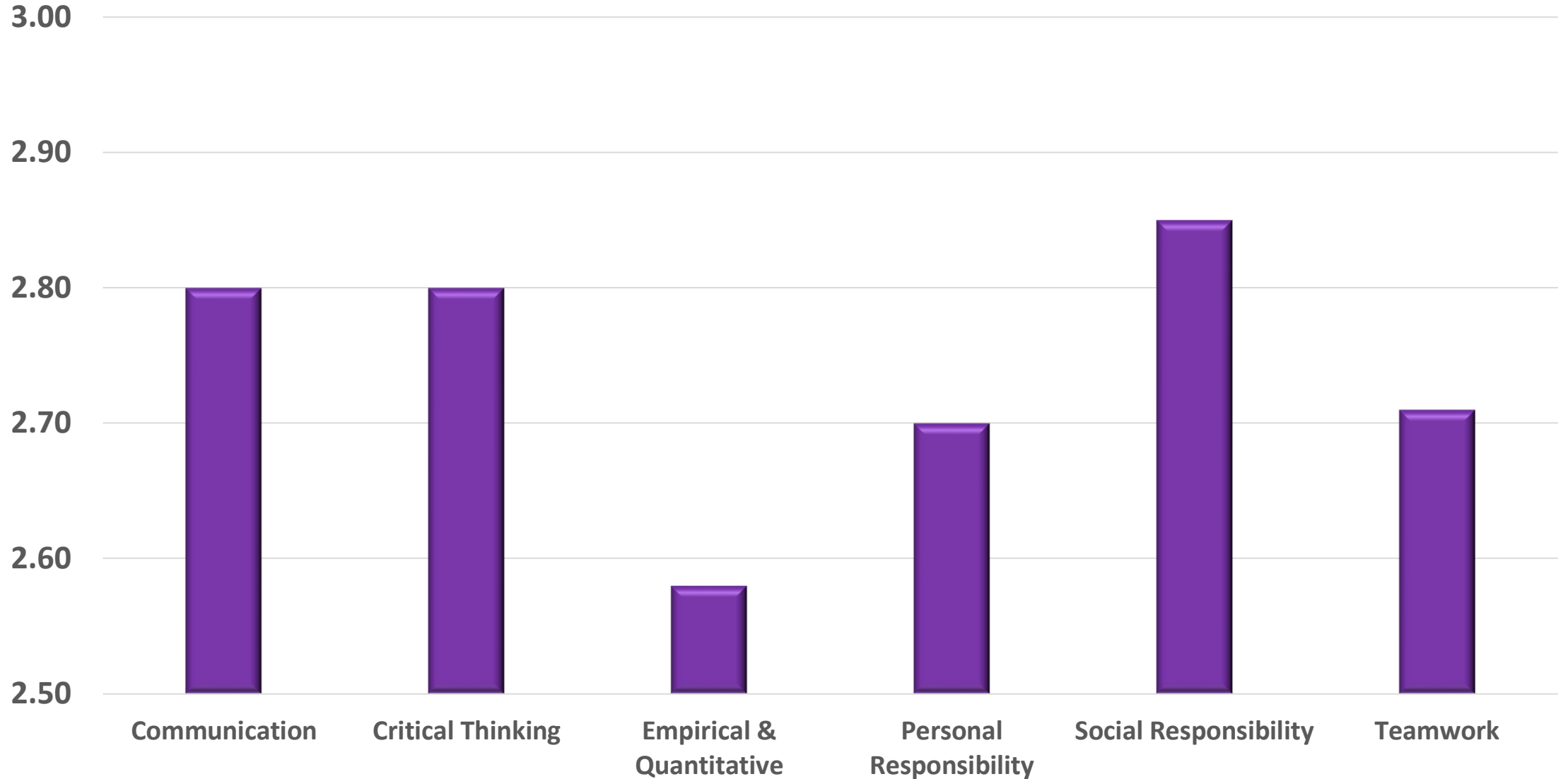
## Positive Attributes

- Graduates from December
- Going back several years
- Thousands of data points (7692)
- Multiple instructors per student
- Grades are long-term (semester)

## Potential Shortfalls

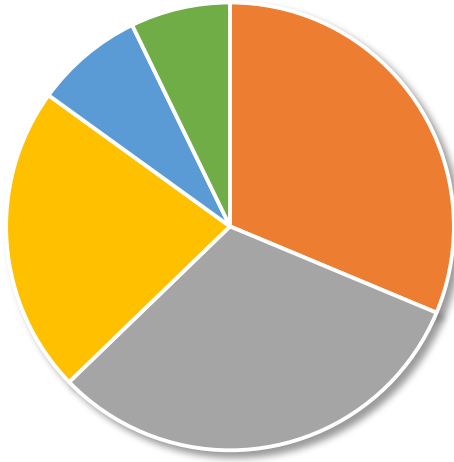
- Doesn't show what non-grads are learning
- Core is *not* focus of these courses
- Unsure what % is core per course
- Core has changed over time
- Less personal interaction/attention
- Re-takes diminished (F's included)

# Lower-level GPA by Core Objective

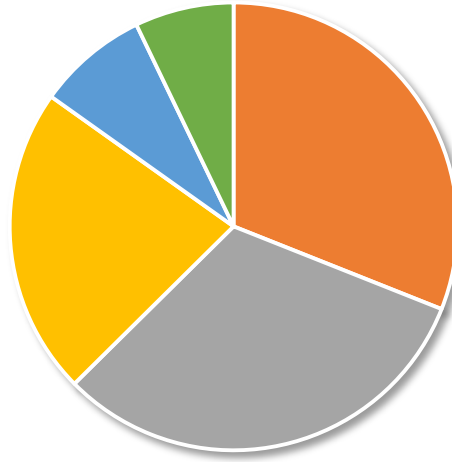




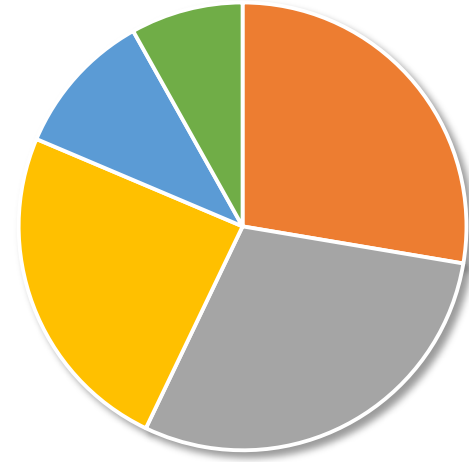
Communication



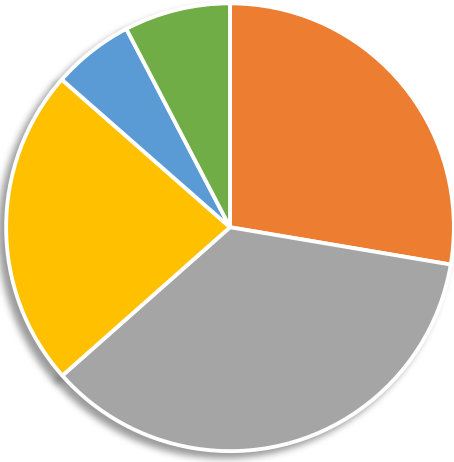
Critical Thinking



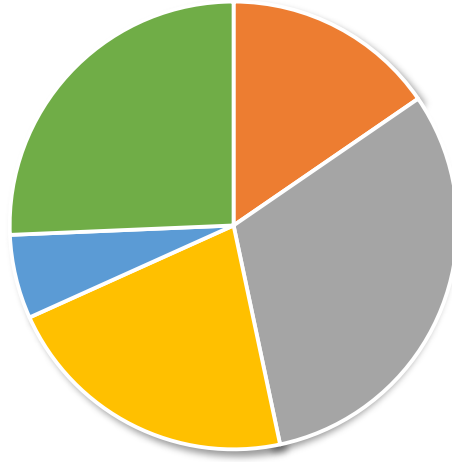
Empirical & Quantitative Skills



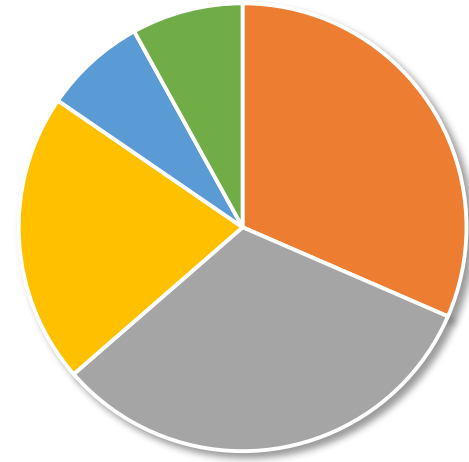
Personal Responsibility



Social Responsibility

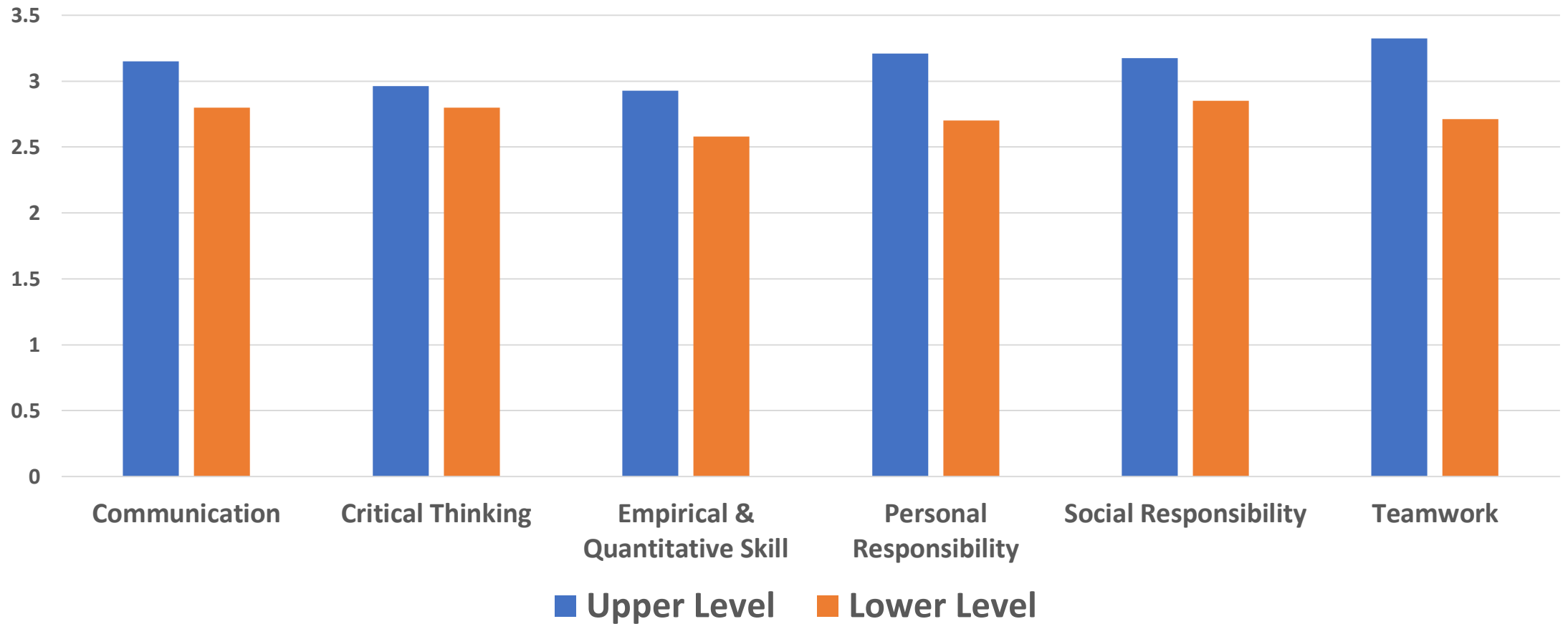


Teamwork



 A  B  C  D  Other (F, WP, Etc.)

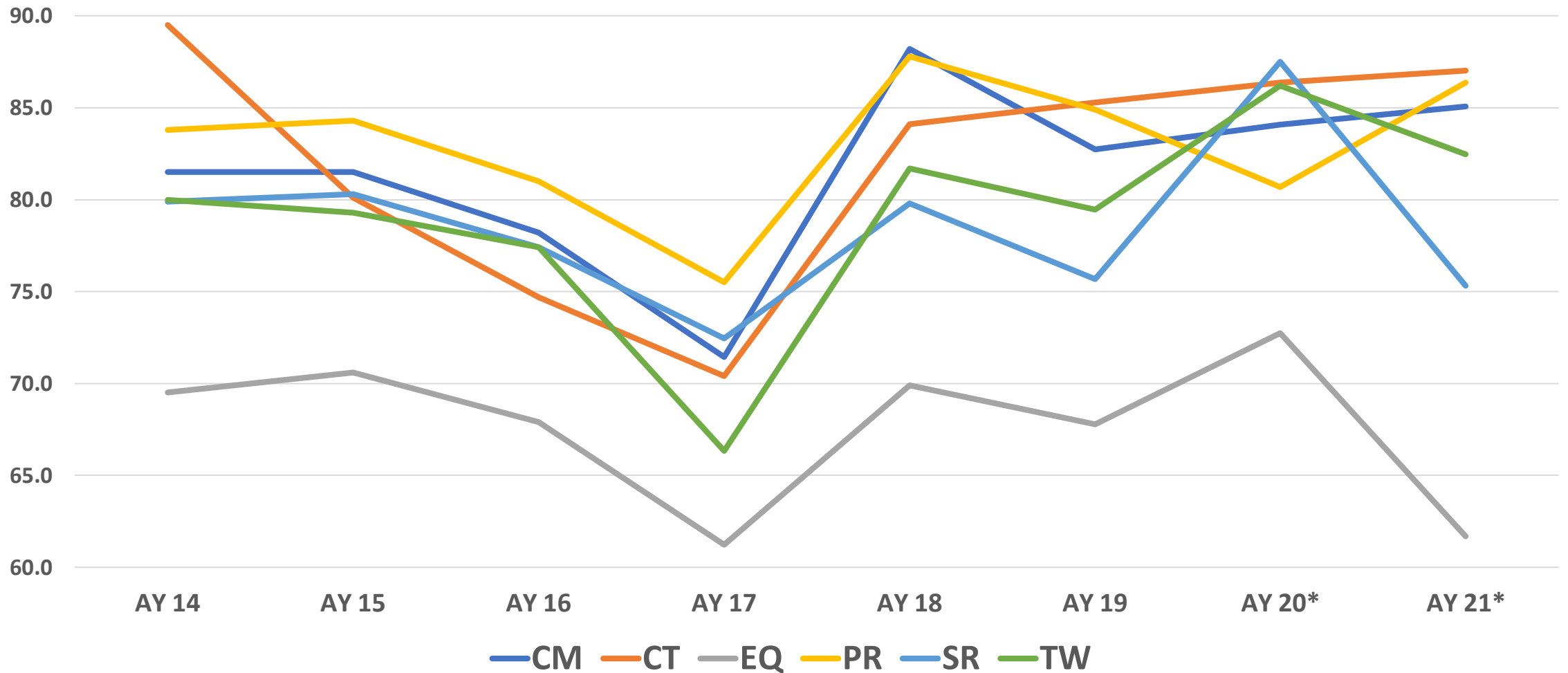
# Upper vs. Lower Level



# Third: Student Self-evaluations

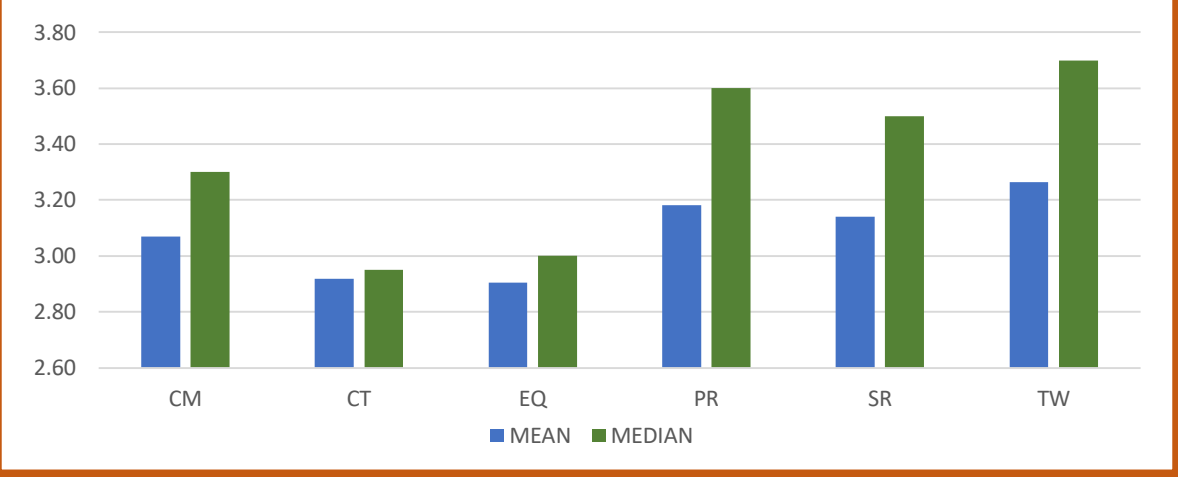
- Senior Exit Survey: sent to All Students Registered for Graduation
- Six Questions based on the following question format:
  - Stem--*These statements indicate whether YOU think you have made progress. How much progress at SFA do you think you made?"*
  - Short explanation of each Core Objective
- Dependent Variable: "What % gave 4 or 5?"
- Strangely, not really ordinal—just based on ordinal data.

# Percentage that scored their progress 4 or 5



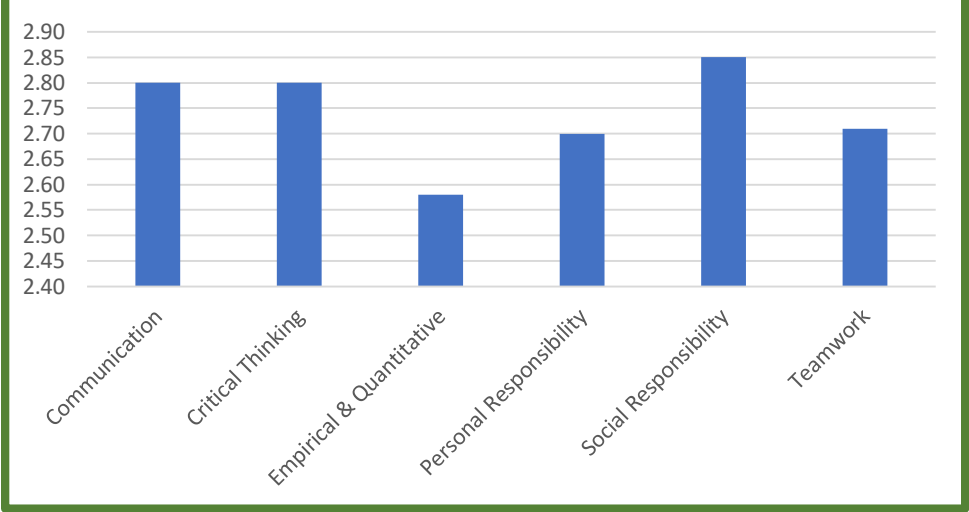
# What Faculty Thought of December Graduates

Upper-level Means/Medians (Rescaled)



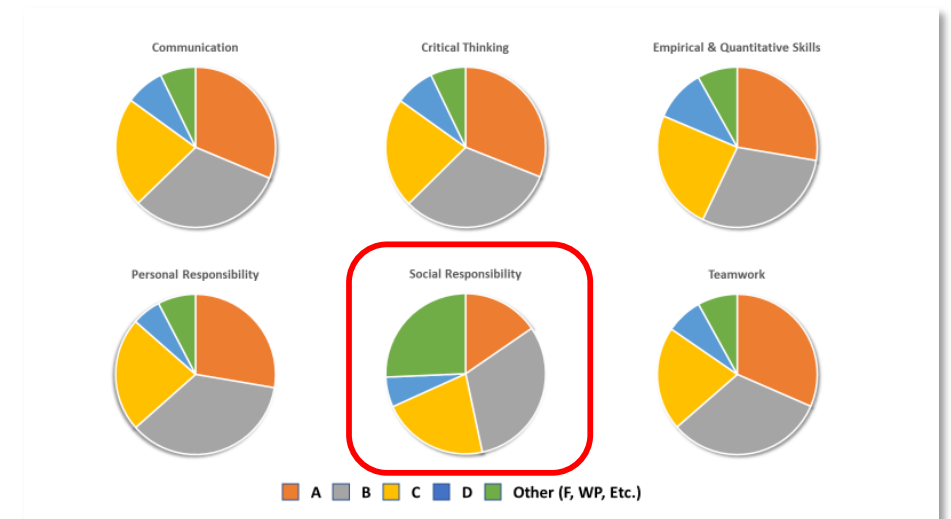
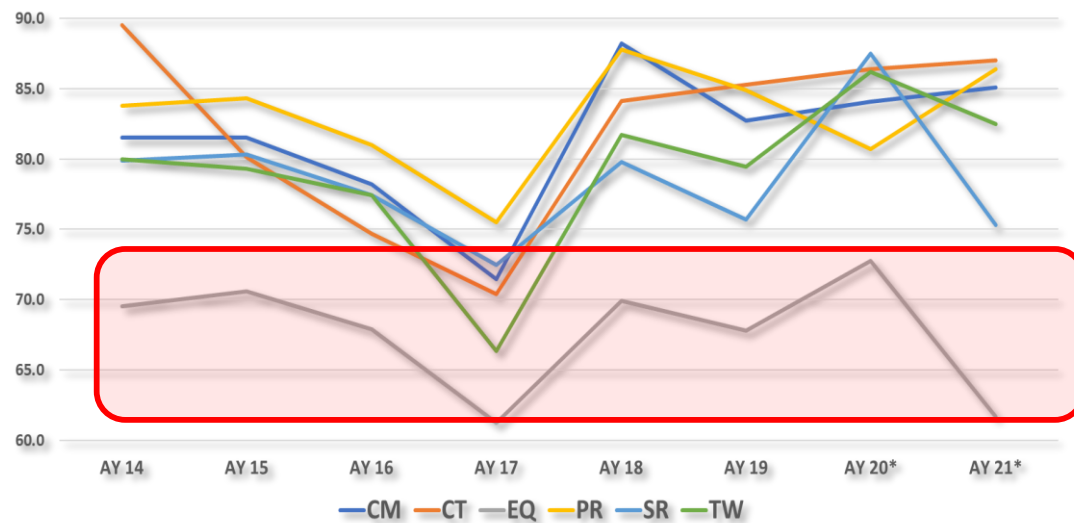
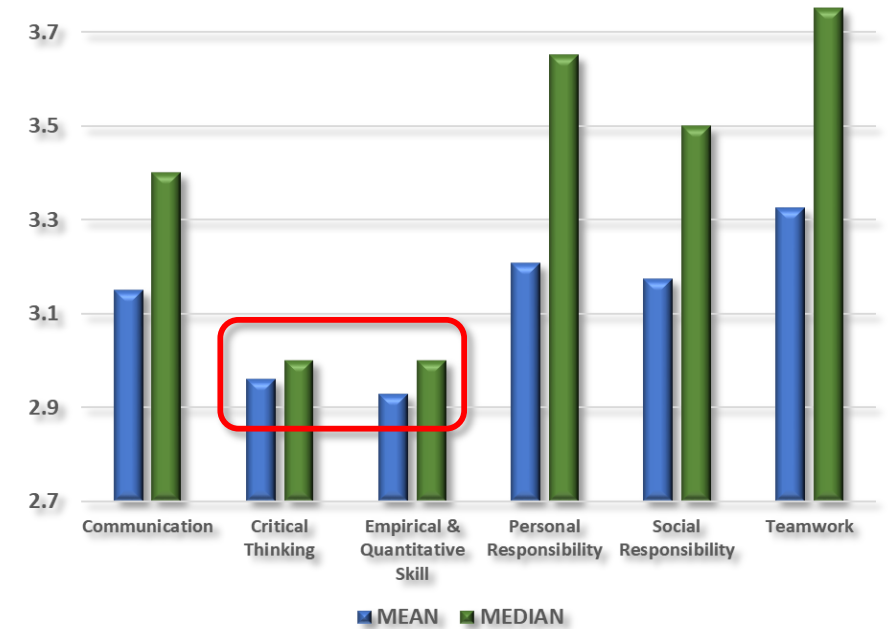
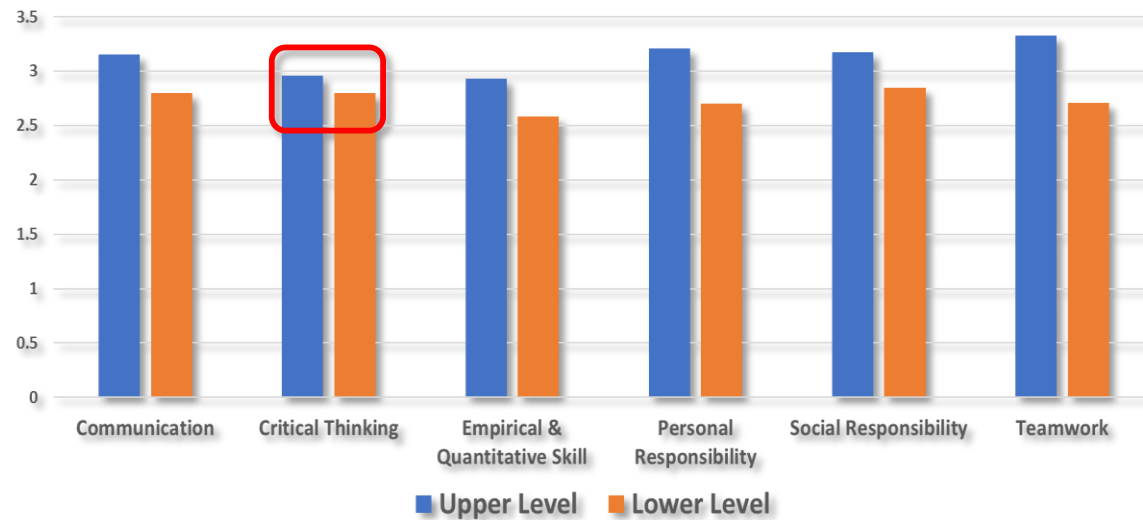
# Student Performance in Core Classes

Lower-level GPA



What ideas do you have?  
What thoughts will you take away from this?  
How might we improve our approach?

# Potential Areas for University Improvement Efforts



Thank you for participating!