

Core Curriculum Student Learning

Stephen F. Austin State University



Town Hall for Faculty
January 25, 2024

List of 2023-24 Committee Members

Name	Title	College/Dept/Office
Christina Sinclair <i>Chair</i>	Associate Dean	College of Education
Aryendra Chakravartty	Faculty Senate Rep	College of Liberal & Applied Arts
Marc Guidry	Associate Provost	Division of Academic Affairs
Karyn Hall	Executive Director	Office of Strategic Analytics & Institutional Research
Casey Hart	Professor	College of Liberal & Applied Arts
John Mehaffey	Associate Professor	Arthur Temple College of Forestry & Agriculture
Claire Murphy	Assistant Professor	Micky Elliott Cole of Fine Arts
Clint Richardson	Associate Professor	College of Sciences & Mathematics
Kristen Waddell	Assistant Professor	Nelson Ruche College of Business
Chris Wilson	Director	Office of Institutional Effectiveness

SFA Core Curriculum Town Hall

Purpose

- Share core curriculum assessment results with the university to determine and discuss SFA student attainment of the six core objectives.
- Note: The data sets from the Faculty Trust Model include faculty assessment, course grades and the senior exit survey, along with previous year comparisons.

Texas Core Curriculum

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



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
Communication	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.							
Mathematics	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.							
Life and Physical Sciences	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.							
Language, Philosophy & Culture	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.							
Creative Arts	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.							
American History	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.							
Government/Political Science	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.							
Social and Behavioral Sciences	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.							
Component Area Option	6	●	●	○	○	○	○
a. A minimum of 3 SCH must meet the definition and corresponding Core Objectives specified in one of the foundational component areas b. As an option for up to 3 semester credit hours of the Component Area Option, an institution may select course(s) that: (i) Meet(s) the definition specified for one or more of the foundational component areas; and (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.							

8.2.b—General Education (from POA Handbook)

8.2

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 in the areas below:

b. Student learning outcomes for collegiate-level general education competencies of its undergraduate degree programs. (71)

- Parsed requirements from this principle:

- Identify outcomes (*already identified for us*)
- Assess these
- Show you are seeking improvement

-The standard does not mandate a specific approach to this outcomes assessment process. (71)

-Reviewers must be even more mindful of the dangers of a “one size fits all” approach for general education than for student learning outcomes within defined majors. (72)

Faculty Trust Model

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

SFA Core Curriculum Town Hall Background/History

- **Town Hall #3: 01-23**

- **Communication Skills**

- Effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication

- **Town Hall #2: 01-22**

- Critical Thinking, Empirical and Quantitative Skills remained as improvement objectives

- **Town Hall #1: 01-21**

- **Critical Thinking Skills**

- Creative thinking, innovation, inquiry and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information

- **Empirical and Quantitative Skills**

- Manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions

Three Sources 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

Once information is considered, then...

Campus-wide Data Become Campus-wide Improvements.

- a. The Core Curriculum Committee determines the focus objective(s).
- b. Each department chooses one objective for improvement.
- c. Each program carries one Improvement Objective regarding general education.
- d. Plans are implemented in the fall term.
- e. Results are reported May 31 of each year.
- f. (Repeat)

1: Upper-level faculty assessments of seniors

- Graduates
- 133 students in sample
- Each student evaluated on all six objectives in Qualtrics
- Time spent was ~50 seconds
- Continued improvement process

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 ☐ No Assessment

Critical Thinking ☐ No Assessment

Empirical & Quantitative Skill ☐ No Assessment

Personal Responsibility ☐ No Assessment

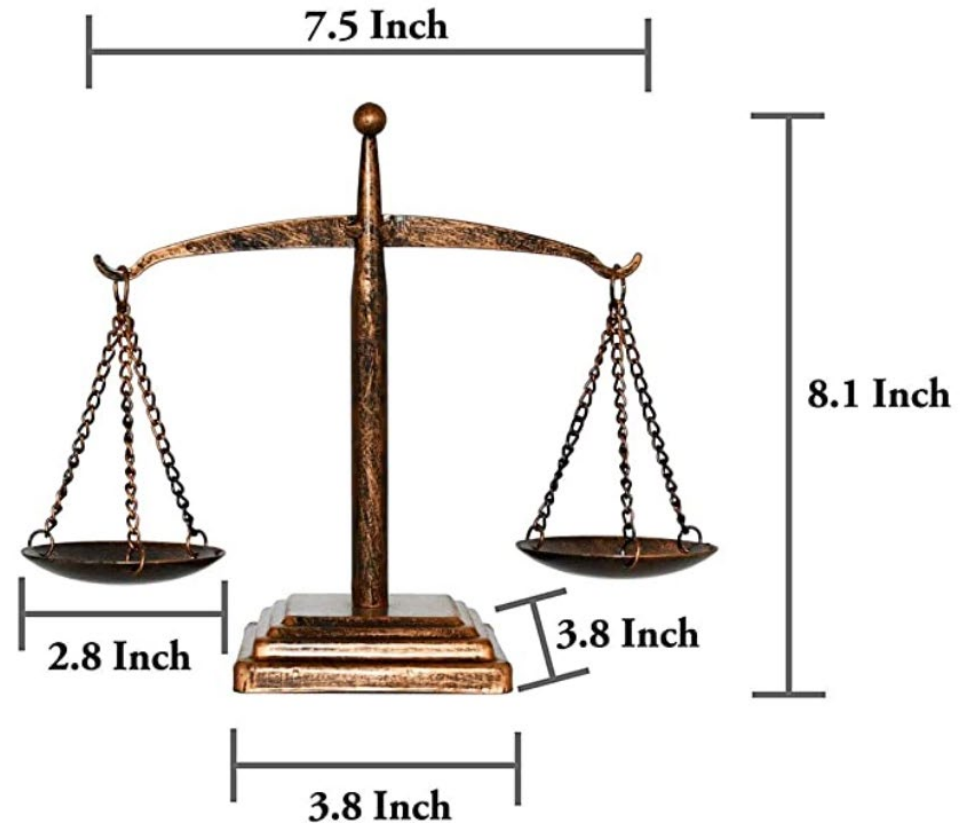
Social Responsibility ☐ No Assessment

Teamwork ☐ No Assessment

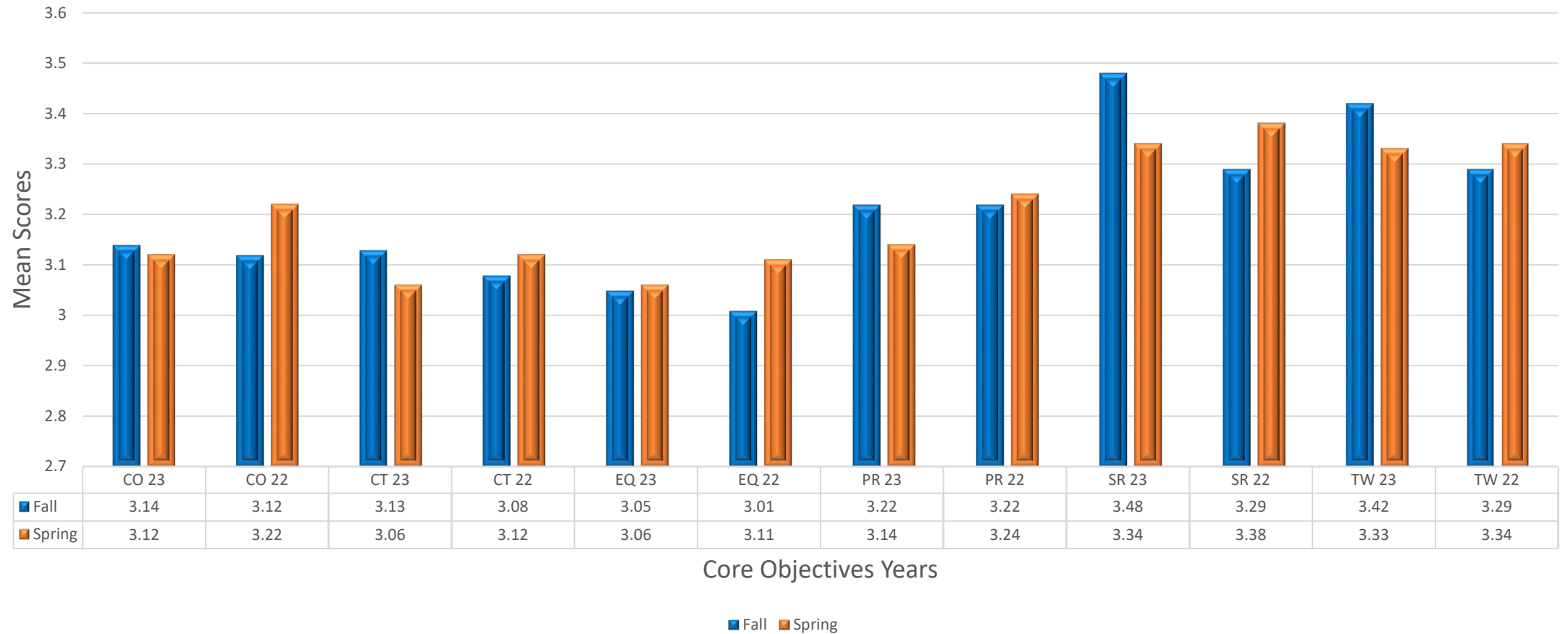
Finish

Notes of Measure

- Due to consistency in population the mean will be represented
- 2 years will be the focus
- COVID implications
- Scale of 1-5 on Qualtrics
- The 5 rating is *always* the mode.



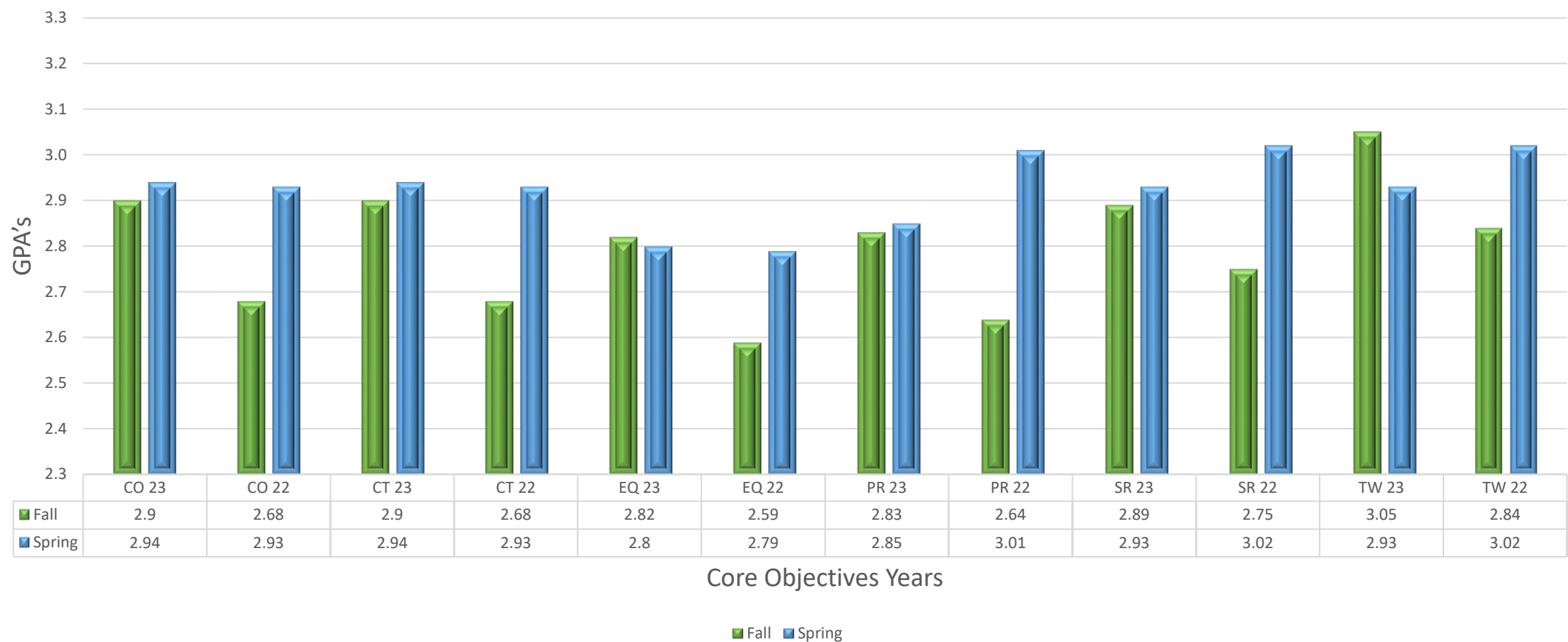
Upper-level Faculty Assessment Mean - 2023 & 2022



2: Sample student core curriculum course grades

- 2 years will be the focus
- Lower-level GPA by core objective
- Grades were assigned years before sampling
- Multiple instructors per student
- Doesn't account for dual credit, dropouts, ect.
- Communication, Critical Thinking & GPA are the same
- Based on a full semester course

Sample Student Core Curriculum Grades - 2023-2022



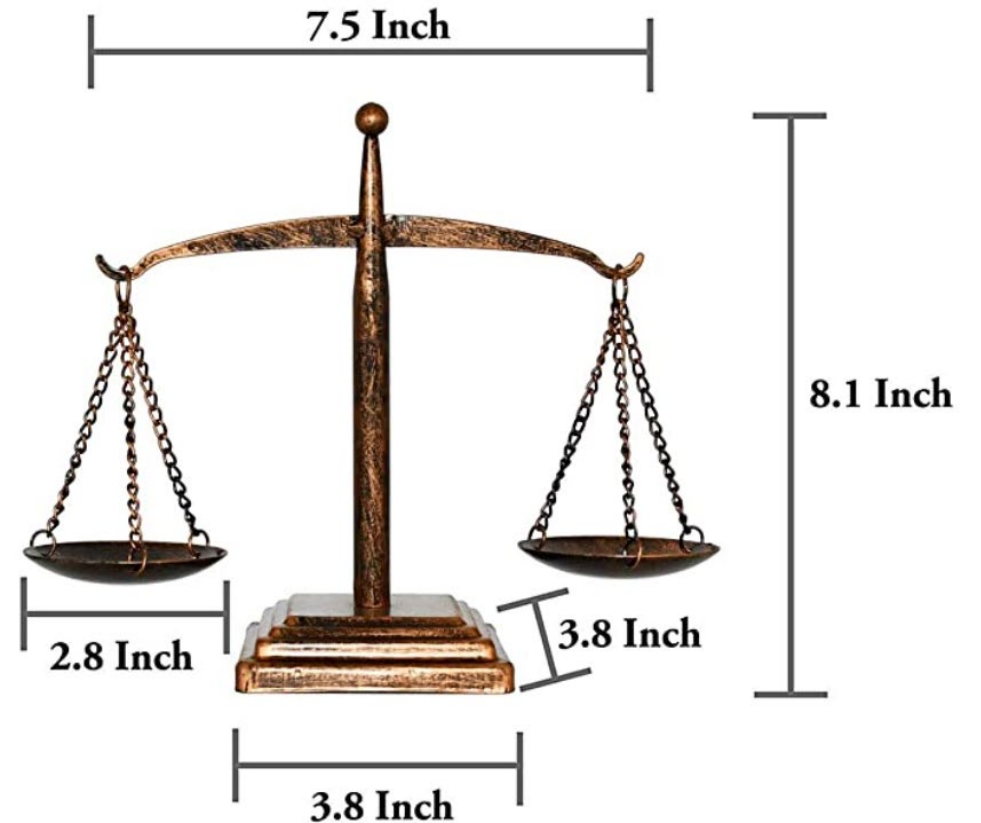
3: Senior exit survey

- Senior Exit Survey: Sent to a sample of students registered for graduation
- (6) Six Likert style questions related to core objectives based on the following format:
 - *These statements indicate whether YOU think you have made progress. How much progress at SFA do you think you made?*
(Plus a short explanation of each objective)
- Dependent Variable: “What % rated their learning/growth at 4 or 5?”

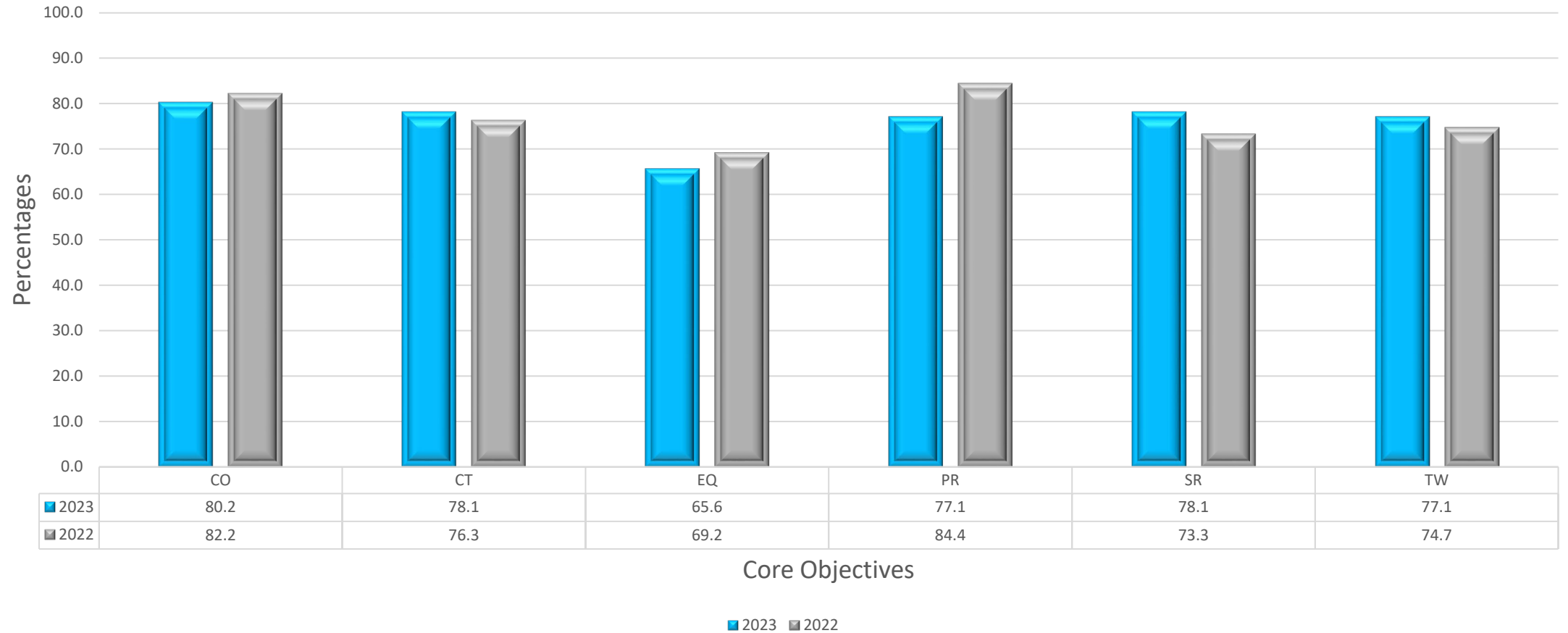
	NONE	A Little	Some Progress	I made good progress	I REALLY made progress at SFA
Critical Thinking Skills - creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Communication Skills - effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Empirical and Quantitative Skills - the manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts in informed conclusions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teamwork - the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Personal Responsibility - the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Social Responsibility - intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Notes of Measure

- 2 years will be the focus
- Most direct measure
(student is assessing self)
- This is a percentage, so there is not a functional mean.
- The response rate varies from semester to semester.



Senior Exit Survey: Percentage that scored their progress 4 or 5



Final Analysis Thoughts

1. Do we want to keep Communication Skills? Based on the history from Empirical & Quantitative Skills.
2. It would be good to think in terms of *your* department & degree situation. What could use improvement where you are?
3. Everybody has a stake in this process, even those who are absent.
4. Perhaps we would determine what we want our graduates to improve for their life in the workforce, not just immediate performance.
5. Is there a visualization or some type of data that is missing in this process?

DISCUSSION

Next Steps

- Input should be sent to Core Curriculum Committee member from your college.
- CCC will meet next week to determine a recommendation to the Provost.
- Improvement plans take effect in Fall 2024 semester.
- Next Core Curriculum Town Hall is January 23, 2025.

Quick Recap & Takeaways

- The Faculty Trust Model is approved by SACSCOC.
- This is not about failure to meet some criterion.
- We need to demonstrate that we are seeking improvement.
- How that happens is up to departments—through discussion.
- Data from this year's work need to be submitted by May 31, along with improvement plans.
- Presentation and FTM information available at www.sfasu.edu/oie