

**University Core Curriculum Committee
Annual Report 2016–2017**

I. Charge to the UCCC

The committee is charged with:

1. Overseeing the composition of the core curriculum;
2. Certifying (and re-certifying) courses and experiential learning activities nominated for inclusion as part of the KU Core;
3. Monitoring the achievement of learning outcomes through these courses and activities; and
4. Reviewing and recommending proposals for certificate programs (e.g., GAP, REP, SLP);
5. Envisioning innovative ways to meet learning outcomes.

II. Representation

The committee includes one voting representative from each of the five divisions of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and one from each of the professional schools with undergraduate programs. The faculty representatives on the 2016–2017 committee included:

Name	Representing	Term
Anton Rosenthal	CLAS—Humanities Division	2015–2018
Svetlana Vassileva-Karagyozova (Fall) Elizabeth Esch (Spring)	CLAS—International & Interdisciplinary Division	2014–2017
Chris Fischer	CLAS—Natural Sciences & Mathematics Division	2015–2018
Tanya Hartman (Fall) Matthew Burke (Spring)	CLAS—School of the Arts	2016–2019
Rachel Krause	CLAS—Social & Behavioral Sciences Division	2016–2019
Farhan Karim (Fall) Hui Cai (Spring)	School of Architecture, Design, & Planning	2016–2019
Christopher Anderson	School of Business	2014–2017
Barbara Phipps (for Lizette Peter)	School of Education	2014–2017
Ken Demarest	School of Engineering	2016–2019
John Broholm	School of Journalism and Mass Communications	2015–2018
Colin Roust (Chair)	School of Music	2014–2017

Michael Wang	School of Pharmacy	2016–2019
Terry Koenig	School of Social Welfare	2015–2018

Student representation on the 2016–2017 committee included:

Name	Representing	Term
Charles Jetty	Student Senate	2016–2017

Ex-officio, non-voting members on the 2016–2017 committee included:

Name	Representing	Term
Jill Becker	Libraries	2016–2017
Norb Belz	Medical Center	2016–2017
DeAngela Burns-Wallace	Undergraduate Studies	No end date
Holly Scheirman	KU Core Coordinator	No end date

III. The Composition of the Core Curriculum: Recertifications, Nominations, and Student Petitions

A. Recertification for Goals 2.1, 2.2, and 3H

During 2016–2017, the committee reviewed the recertification reports for courses meeting Goals 2.1 (Written Communication), 2.2 (Oral Communication), and Goal 3H (Arts and Humanities). The number of courses reviewed were:

Goal 2.1: 20 courses
 Goal 2.2: 15 courses
 Goal 3H: 173 courses

The final decisions on these courses represented the following categories: recertify, recertify with comments, or decertify. If a course was recertified with comments, the department was provided with specific feedback on concerns that the committee would like to see addressed during the next round of recertification. If a course was decertified by the committee, the decision was based on a determination that—even after a request for additional information—the recertification report did not adequately demonstrate that the course met the learning objectives of the Goal. All decertification decisions, regardless of the reason, will take effect Fall 2018, giving time for the department to appeal and for curricular impact to be assessed. The number of courses that fell into each category were:

Recertify: 163 courses
 Recertify with comments: 6 courses

Decertify (request of department): 5 courses
Decertify (by determination of the committee): 1 course
Not taught (hiatus): 17 courses

Courses that were not taught were put into a hiatus status until the courses are brought back into circulation. These courses were not decertified. It was requested that the department notify the UCCC of when the course was next taught for full re-instatement.

B. Student Petitions

During 2016–2017, the committee received 60 student petitions. These petitions were reviewed first by the KU Core Coordinator to ensure that all required documents were included. They were next reviewed by the UCCC Chair, who took one of three actions: request for more information, reject based on inappropriateness for the learning objectives of the Goal, or advance to the full committee for consideration. The decisions on those petitions were:

Inappropriate for the Goal (UCCC Chair): 5 petitions
Rejected (full committee): 12 petitions
Approved (full committee): 43 petitions

UCCC created a subcommittee to review student petitions submitted during the summer 2017 when the UCCC does not conduct regular meetings. This subcommittee considered 23 petitions, of which 17 were approved and 6 were denied.

C. Course Nominations

During 2016–2017, the committee received 47 nominations for individual courses and 2 nominations for multi-course sequences. The actions taken on course nominations were one of three options: approve, reject, request for more information. In the case of a rejection, departments have the option of appealing the decision, a process that involves working with the UCCC Chair to craft a statement of appeal. The number of courses that fell into each category were:

Individual courses

Approved: 38 courses
Rejected: 13 courses
Request for more information: 3 courses
Approved after appeal: 3 courses
Rejected after appeal: 0 courses

Multi-course sequences

Approved: 2 sequences
Rejected: 0 sequences

Request for more information: 1 sequences
Approved after appeal: 1 sequences
Rejected after appeal: 0 sequences

IV. The Composition of the Core Curriculum: Transfer Agreements, Experiences, Etc.

This year marked the fourth year of the implementation of the KU Core. Guided by the UCCC Chair and the Vice Provost of Undergraduate Studies, the committee began a process of reviewing the Core policies (see also the “Data Collection and Analysis” section below). Among the policy issues considered by the committee were:

A. Transfer Issues

- Associate of Arts Degree from regionally accredited public colleges, public universities, or community colleges outside of Kansas: Rejected.
- Baker University “Quest” sequence for Goals 2.1 and 2.2: Approved.
- Baker University “Quest—Global Series” sequence for Goals 4.1 and 4.2: Rejected.
- Johnson County Community College Associate of Science Degree for Goals 1–3: Approved.
- Metropolitan Community College Associate of Arts Degree for Goals 1–3: Approved.
- University of Missouri-Kansas City “Discourse” sequence for Goals 2.1 and 2.2: Approved.

B. Educational Experiences

From its inception, the Core Curriculum has promised that educational experiences could be used to meet Core Goals. However, there was no policy language to provide guidance as to what these educational experiences would look like. While a number of experiences were fast-tracked into the Core when it was first implemented, no experiences have been proposed or approved since then. With the approval of this new language, the committee hopes to encourage proposals for new experiences that meet the learning objectives of Core Goals.

With the advice of John Augusto, Assistant Vice Provost for Experiential Learning, the policy language was drafted around four principles: Intention, preparedness, and planning; Reflection; Monitoring progress; Assessment and evaluation. The process for submitting an individualized sponsored experience can be found on the KU Core website at kucore.ku.edu/educational-experiences.

V. 2017 Haufler KU Core Innovation Award

The Christopher Haufler KU Core Innovation Award, funded by the Office of the Provost, honors the creative and forward-thinking work of academic departments in developing or transforming outstanding Core courses, assessing the KU Core learning outcomes, and disseminating the assessments as models of excellent teaching and learning. The 2017 Award was presented to the Department of Curriculum and Teaching for their transformations of C&T 100: Introduction to the Education Profession. Their submission and former award winners can be found on the KU Core website at kucore.ku.edu.

VI. State of the Core

A. Data Collection and Analysis

The Core Curriculum was implemented in 2013, with all incoming freshman from that point onward required to meet the goals of the curriculum. Having reached the four-year-graduation mark for that class of students, we can begin to collect data on how those students have met the goals. The Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies and the Office of Institutional Research & Planning have worked throughout the year to collect this data.

Although the data currently exhibits too much statistical noise to make any specific observations, there are several general trends that can be reported:

1. The vast majority of completed goals have been met by coursework. However, due to the current programming of Student Information Systems, that coursework may not have been done at KU. "Coursework" here includes KU equivalent courses that (1) are in the Core and (2) appear on the student's transcript as a result of either transferring from another university or as a result of performance on the AP, IB, or CLEP exams. (For details on which courses students can earn credit for on the AP, IB, or CLEP exams, see <https://admissions.ku.edu/earningcredit>.)
2. The most common exemptions are for Goal 1.2 (Quantitative Literacy) and 2.1 (Written Communication). The former is granted for students whose ACT math score is ≥ 26 . The latter is granted for students whose ACT verbal score is ≥ 27 .
3. A majority of students are completing Goals 1 through 3 during their first and second years, and a majority of students are completing Goals 4 through 6 during their third and fourth years. However, there are instances of students completing each goal at all points across the four-year period.
4. A successful education promotes thinking within or across disciplines to generate original ideas, to be creative, and to find new ways of perception and expression. Students have demonstrated interdisciplinary thinking by completing a double major, a major and co-major, or a major and minor.

Since the inception of the core, there has been a steady increase in double-majors and a significant increase in minors.

It is hoped that the 2017–2018 committee will be able use more refined versions of this data to prepare recommendations for revisions to the UCCC Policy.

B. Procedural Changes

During the 2015–2016 academic year, the regular course of the committee's business required committee members to access documents and other information in three separate systems: Hawk Drive, CourseLeaf, and the Course Inventory Management System (CIM). This was a significant burden and required an unnecessary amount of time from the committee members. During Summer 2016, the Office of the Vice Provost of Undergraduate Studies worked with the Center for Online and Distance Learning to set up a Blackboard site for the committee. All documents for the committee's review were prepared by the KU Core Coordinator and made available to committee members in Blackboard. With a single login and a single system, the work done by committee members was far more efficient. In addition, the Blackboard site provides a far better means of archiving the committee's work than was previously done.

2016–2017 marked the second year of the recertification process. The committee essentially adopted the same working process as had been designed the previous year. The committee employed several features in Blackboard to streamline the process, while the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies and the KU Core Coordinator refined the administrative processes for tracking courses as they moved through the recertification process. One key observation was that cross-listed courses were not being recognized as being linked; this is now being addressed by the Course Information Management system.

C. Response to 2017 University Core Curriculum Survey

For the third year, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee has charged the Faculty Rights, Privileges and Responsibilities Committee to monitor the implementation of the KU Core Curriculum by administering a survey. Because the report on that survey was delivered in a timely fashion to the UCCC Chair, this year's UCCC report responds to the major themes identified in that survey.

1. "Process tedious and inefficient."

The procedural efficiencies mentioned above have ensured that the committee is completing its work as quickly as possible. Course nomination forms and student petition forms are distributed to committee members 10 days prior to each biweekly meeting. Decisions on committee votes are generally reported within 2 days

after each biweekly meeting. As a result, the committee takes action on all course nominations and student petitions within 2 to 4 weeks of them reaching the committee. At no point in the 2016–2017 academic year did the committee have a backlog.

All course nominations are advanced to the committee by the various curriculum committees of the College and the professional schools after passing through the Registrar's Office. We observe that these curriculum committees have widely varying response times and that those committees should evaluate their processes for any inefficiencies that could be eliminated to improve the course nomination process.

The course recertification process takes a considerable amount of time for the committee. Departments are expected to submit their reports by September 15. The committee evaluates the reports during October and November, with any requests for additional information going out in December. Revised reports are received in January with final decisions being made during the committee's February meetings. Those final decisions are reported in March.

In the two years of the recertification process, that calendar has proved ambitious. In 2015–2016, the recertification process was not fully completed until after the Spring Semester had ended. This year, several efficiencies were realized in the process and it was fully completed in early April. The outgoing UCCC Chair, the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies, and the KU Core Coordinator will continue to review and refine the process in preparation for the 2017–2018 academic year.

The KU Core website will be overhauled during Summer 2017. One of the new additions will be clarifications of the nomination and recertification processes and timelines.

2. "Course approval perceived as arbitrary and political."

This theme appears to be an extension of the "Perception of bias" reported in the 2016 survey. From the perspective of the committee, we remain unclear as to what is being perceived as "arbitrary and political." For any courses that are rejected by the committee, we encourage the nominating department to discuss an appeal with the chair.

3. "Lack of communication of feedback from UCCC."

The UCCC is supported out of the Undergraduate Studies office. In the past, the communication has been handled by the executive assistant.

Effective in February, the KU Core Coordinator position was created to relay information in a more timely and efficient manner.

The week following UCCC meetings, the coordinator communicated decisions on petitions and course nominations. The recertification decisions were held until the end of the process to be reported.

In partnership with the chair and the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies, the coordinator has created a communication plan to create a more timely communication strategy for the UCCC. In addition, a calendar of important dates will be added to the website.

4. “Not enough science or technology courses.”

This is an artifact of which courses were fast-tracked into the Core Curriculum at its creation and which courses have been nominated since that time. The lack of science and technology courses is particularly noticeable in Goal 3N (Natural Sciences), for which 58 courses are currently approved (as opposed to 187 courses for Goal 3H and 99 for Goal 3S). The Natural Sciences Division of the College and the College of Engineering currently account for approximately 13% (153 of 1171) of the courses approved for the Core Curriculum. UCCC is willing to give feedback on any proposal and encourages the department to submit if they feel the course meets the guidelines.

5. “Transfer courses do not go through same process.”

This observation is correct. The reasons for this are rooted in both policy and practicality.

The Kansas Board of Regents mandates that: “Students who have earned an Associate of Arts degree from a regionally accredited Kansas public college, public university, or public community college will be considered to have met Goals 1-3 of the KU Core (general education).” Based on decisions made this year by the committee on the recommendation of the Transfer Articulation and Policy Council, a similar policy has been adopted for Associate of Science degree holders from Johnson County Community College, Associate of Arts degree holders from Metropolitan Community College (Kansas City, MO), and for students transferring from Baker University who have completed the Quest general education curriculum.

Apart from these blanket approvals, if a course is identified by CredTran as transferring as a particular course that is approved for a KU Core Goal, then the Registrar’s system will automatically indicate that the student has met that Core Goal. The committee sees this often in relation to Goal 2.2 (Oral Communication)—for example, if CredTran transfers a course as COMS 130, then the student is has met

Goal 2.2; if the course transfers as COMS 150, then the student has not met that goal.

The transfer courses that are considered on a course-by-course basis by the committee are reviewed in the form of student petitions. At this time, there is no other mechanism in place for review of transfer courses.

VII. Recommendations for the 2017–2018 Committee

A. Continue to refine the recertification process

It seems difficult to imagine that the process can be fully completed before March, but it would be ideal and should be possible to finish by Spring Break. The primary reason for delay this year was late submissions by departments, so a more proactive communication strategy may be helpful.

In addition, the quality of feedback for the requests for more information (the “revise and resubmit” requests) was widely varying. There needs to be a better mechanism to ensure that departments are provided with clear and specific requests of what additional information they need to provide.

B. Consider the role of student representatives

Over the past two years, the Student Senate has struggled to find representatives who were willing and able to attend committee meetings. Because UCCC policy requires that 20% of the committee be student representation, this has consistently raised quorum issues.

C. Revise the course nomination forms in CIM and the recertification forms

After going through the recertification process twice, it has become clear that the questions on both the nomination and recertification forms need to mirror more closely the language for the learning objectives of each Goal, as stated on the KU Core website.

D. Review the student petition process and forms

Every year a number of student petitions are submitted without all of the required documentation and, in some cases, the documentation is still insufficient for UCCC to feel confident enough in the petition to approve it. The process and forms should be evaluated to seek greater clarification of the committee’s expectations and to seek any refinements that can be made in the process.

E. Address governance and communication concerns

The Office of the Provost in conjunction with the UCCC chair, the UCCC, and the Faculty Senate Executive Committee proposed an additional seat on UCCC for a Faculty Senate Representative. This seat will be a one-year pilot to

help determine the best long-term structure, term length, and voting parameters for the role.

Respectfully submitted by,

Colin Roust

Chair, University Core Curriculum Committee 2016–2017