

KU Core Communications - Issue 1

Hello, and welcome to KU Core Communications, a regular opportunity to share with you the activities and actions of the University Core Curriculum Committee (UCCC). We are the committee for The KU Core Curriculum made up of faculty members and students who oversee the implementation and improvement of the general education requirements for all undergraduate students at KU. Through this frequent communication, we hope to provide better transparency and understanding of how we work, and offer opportunities for input from our university constituents. As often as appropriate, we will share updates on our work, and documents such as the report of the chair covering the work of previous semesters. The 2017-18 report is located on the KU Core website and can be downloaded [here](#).

In the fall of 2011, work began on the transformation of undergraduate education at KU. The pilot courses of the First-Year Seminar (FYS) program met and the first Common Book selected. More importantly, what would become the KU Core Curriculum began to take shape as the courses were nominated, certified and readied for an offering.

When launched, the mission statement read: *The KU Core is designed to yield fundamental skills, build a broad background of knowledge, generate capacities and opportunities for blending and creating ideas, strengthen an appreciation of cultural and global diversity, and cultivate ethical integrity.* We remain dedicated to this mission and its importance to KU.

The planned review of all certified courses is a critical component of the success of the KU Core. Through a six-year recertification process, we review courses on a rotating cycle. When recertified, each will continue to provide the excellent education our undergraduates deserve.

As we enter the sixth year of offering courses in the KU Core Curriculum, we reach a significant milestone. The UCCC understands there is always room for improvement in any program and we plan to use the coming months to work with the University community to discover and implement what will make the KU Core better for all involved.

As chair of the UCCC, I hope to work closely with members of the faculty – especially with members of the Faculty Rights, Privileges and Responsibilities (FRPR) committee of the Faculty Senate – to better understand past concerns and address common issues. Before classes began, I met with FRPR chair Prof. Joe Harrington, and we agreed on several ways our committees

might collaborate.

Among the shared ideas, we agree the most significant will be an effort to work together to gather your thoughts about how to make appropriate adjustments to the KU Core. This cooperation is critical as we seek to provide the best and most necessary improvements as we offer a foundational education for our students.

Our strategy is simple; we plan to provide multiple channels through which you can communicate with us. Though we are early in the semester, you will soon see a survey to collect your thoughts about the KU Core broadly. Questions tailored to your primary role as a student, staff or faculty member will allow you to base your input on your work with the KU Core.

We also plan personal visits to groups within these broad constituencies. I will facilitate these conversations with members of FRPR and UCCC, moving the discussion from general thoughts to specific suggestions for improvement. By the end of this semester, this information gathering process will produce a more unobstructed view of where we are and how we can work to make the KU Core better. My goal is to report regularly on this effort and update you on the ongoing work of the UCCC.

I encourage you to join the process by taking part in this effort. Complete the survey when it arrives in your email. Attend one or more of the meetings I'll lead within your department, school and in open campus forums. Or visit a UCCC meeting. They are open to the public on alternate Tuesdays at 2:30 pm in 455 Watson Library. The meeting schedule is on the KU Core website at this link: [UCCC Calendar](#).

We are not dismantling the KU Core. It has improved our undergraduate educational achievement, and despite the fits and bumps found in version 1.0, it provides a robust model we can improve.

KU Core 1.2, our working name for this project, will conclude next spring with outcomes we hope will include:

- Greater clarity of KU Core Goal language and Learning Outcomes
- Improved transparency of how KU Core Goals complement student degree pathways

- Simplification of processes for course inclusion, recertification and assessment, and petition review

With your valuable help, I know we can move the KU Core toward a better space. I look forward to working with many of you, and the opportunity to share our progress with everyone throughout this academic year.

Onward to excellence,

Mike Williams, chair

University Core Curriculum Committee

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and Mass Communications