

Issue 4

Greetings from the University Core Curriculum Committee –

Welcome back to campus for the start of the Spring 2020 semester. Before everyone gets too busy with the beginning of the term, I hope you can take a few minutes to read this update on the work of the UCCC. It was a busy fall, and there are many items on the agenda for the months ahead.

Faculty members of the Committee are somewhat newer than usual this academic year, with seven members taking their elected positions or assuming the remainder of a colleague's term. Typically, faculty representatives serve three-year terms. Besides the usual turnover of members at the end of their three-year terms, several members retired and another accepted an administrative position in his academic unit. University policy requires five members representing the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and one member each from the eight professional schools. We also have three student members.

We also began the school year with revised voting rules. Along with the 13 faculty members, the student members now have full voting rights in all review of courses for KU Core inclusion or recertification and hearing of student petitions. The increased involvement of students was overdue and significantly increase the vital voice of student representation in curriculum discussion.

The UCCC is well into the process of its assessment of courses that meet the expectations of KU Core Goals 3 - Natural Science (93 courses) and Goal 5 - Social Responsibility and Ethics (66 courses). As in past years, subcommittees of the UCCC meet regularly to review recertification materials, including assessment of student learning outcome success, as submitted by the academic unit in September. The course review typically wraps up in March, and departments receive notification of the outcome.

In the next month, another faculty group will be continuing the critical effort to understand the strengths and weaknesses of KU Core. Building on the improved

collaboration of the KU Faculty Senate and the UCCC, an ad hoc committee was created by votes of both groups last spring and began its work in September. Each larger group appointed three members, and in the ad hoc committee's meetings, the team has focused on how the KU Core is meeting the language and purpose of its mission statement:

"The KU Core is designed to yield yields 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."

To understand how we are preparing students for the 21st Century, the ad hoc group hopes to conduct listening sessions during faculty meetings during the spring. The question is not whether the KU Core is good or bad. But like everything we do, we know there is always room for improvement. Please watch for an announcement about when the KU Core group will be visiting your faculty.

We look forward to the conversations, listening to your ideas, and working together to improve what we do.

Soon, the Office of Undergraduate Studies will post the call for submissions for the Haufler Award. The Haufler award was established shortly after the adoption of the KU Core to honor 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 UCCC will review submissions and announce a winner by late March. The award will be presented to the winner at the Center for Teaching Excellence's (CTE) annual Student Learning Symposium (SLS). The Haufler nomination deadline has been extended as the SLS will be hosted in the fall semester rather than the spring.

One last important note: The 2018-2019 annual report of the UCCC is live on the KU Core website at: Annual Reports. It contains data and a summary of the Committee work of last year.

Best of luck in the coming semester.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mike Williams". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mike Williams

University Core Curriculum Committee chair

Associate Professor, William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass
Communications