

## University Core Curriculum Committee Annual Report 2018-2019

### I. Charge to the UCCC

The committee is charged with:

1. Overseeing the composition of the core curriculum;
2. Certifying (and recertifying) 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. UCCC 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 2018-2019 committee included:

Name	Representing	Term of Service
Hui Cai	School of Architecture, Design & Planning	2016-2019
Ken Demarest	School of Engineering	2016-2019
Elizabeth Esch/Rami Zeedan (Spring 2019)	CLAS - International & Interdisciplinary Division	2017-2020
Allen Ford	School of Business	2017-2020
Susan King	School of Education	2017-2020
Terry Koenig	School of Social Welfare	2016-2019
Rachel Krause	CLAS - Social & Behavioral Sciences Division	2016-2019
Myunghyun Oh	CLAS - Natural Sciences & Mathematics Division	2018-2021
Dorthy Pennington	CLAS - School of the Arts	2016-2019
Colin Roust	School of Music	2017-2020
Sandi Zimdars-Swartz	CLAS - Humanities Division	2018-2021
Michael Wang	School of Pharmacy	2016-2019
Mike Williams	School of Journalism and Mass Communications	2018-2021
Addison Henson	Student Representative	2017-2018
Max Schieber	Student Representative	2017-2018

Ex-officio, non-voting members on the 2018–2019 committee included the following:

Name	Representing	Term
Jill Becker	Libraries	2018-2019
Jan Hudzicki	Medical Center	2018–2019

DeAngela Burns-Wallace	Undergraduate Studies	No end date
Holly Scheirman	KU Core Coordinator	No end date

Shannon Portillo, from KU Edwards Undergraduate programs, and a representative from the Faculty Executive Committee attended periodically.

### III. Overseeing the Composition of the KU CORE: Course Recertifications, Nominations for Inclusion, and Student Petitions

#### A. Recertification for Goals

During 2018–2019, the committee reviewed the recertification reports for courses meeting Goal 4.2 Culture and Diversity – Global. The total number of courses reviewed for Goal 4.2 was 212 courses.

#### **Recertification Process Results:**

Recertified: 91 courses

Recertified with comments: 53 courses

Decertified (request of department): 28 courses

Decertified (by determination of the committee): 7 courses

Not taught (on hiatus): 33 courses

The final decisions on these courses represented these 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 wants to see addressed during the next round of recertification. In only a few instances was a course decertified by the committee and this 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.

Two departments initially chose to not submit the materials necessary for review and recertification of their courses listed for Goal 4.2

One department reconsidered their decision and in late Spring 2019 term asked to have that request changed and instead have their courses reviewed. This request was received well after the review process was completed for this year. UCCC will review those courses next year.

An additional department submitted no required materials for consideration of their courses due for recertification. Despite multiple extensions of the September 2018 deadline, and offers to provide assistance from UCCC, the department did not meet obligations for course recertification and their Goal 4.2 courses were decertified. As with any decertification, the courses will be placed on the public notice list on the UCCC website with removal from the KU Core curriculum effective Fall 2020.

Courses 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 reinstatement.

## B. Course Nominations

During 2018–2019, the committee received 48 nominations for individual courses and no nominations for multi-course sequences. The actions taken on course nominations may be one of three options: **Approval**, **Request for Information** or **Rejection**.

- **Approval** indicates the course is fully accepted and will be included in the KU Core.
- **Request for Information** indicates the committee sees potential in the proposal but has questions about some aspects of the course that must be resolved before approval.
- **Rejection** indicates the course, as proposed, does not meet requirements for the Goal. With a rejection, departments may appeal the decision. The appeal may simply be a letter requesting a reconsideration of the submission or a revision of the course to address UCCC concerns.

The UCCC is committed to working with faculty members to assist in the process of development of courses for inclusion in the KU Core.

With Request for Information, the response from UCCC to the faculty member indicates what information is needed. If the faculty member has questions, they may contact the KU Core Coordinator who may include the UCCC Chair to provide assistance. Once the necessary information is gathered, it is sent to the KU Core Coordinator for inclusion in a review of the course at the next UCCC meeting.

In the situation where a course does not meet UCCC Approval, it is recommended the department chair or faculty member who created the original submission meet with the UCCC Chair to discuss the results of the UCCC review. This meeting may include consideration of revisions to the original course that would be necessary to move it toward acceptance.

The appeal, regardless of form, will be submitted to the KU Core Coordinator who will place it on the schedule for the next full committee meeting.

The number of courses nominated that fell into each category were:

Approved: 26 courses

Rejected: 11 courses

Request for more information: 7 courses

Approved after appeal: 3 courses

Rejected after appeal: 1 course

There were no multi-course sequences submitted for approval this year.

## C. Student Petitions

During 2018–2019, the committee received 89 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 either rejected 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): 11 petitions  
Approved (full committee): 77 petitions

As has been the practice for several years, UCCC created a subcommittee to review student petitions submitted during summer when the UCCC does not conduct regular meetings. This summer subcommittee considered and approved 4 petitions.

#### **D. Other Proposal Support**

The UCCC Chair also met in early May and June 2019 to assist the units within the KU ROTC department with the exploration and crafting of possible multi-course sequences from within their curriculum. These may be submitted to the UCCC meeting during the 2020 academic year.

### **IV. 2019 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 2018 Haufler Award was presented to the Department of Physics and Astronomy for their creation of ALPaCA Grading System for Course Assessment. Below is an excerpt from their submission:

*“The Assessment of Learning Proficiency and Competency Achievement (ALPaCA) system we assign each graded activity (exams, homework, in-class assignments, etc.) or portion of each activity to one or more specific learning objectives for the course. This emphasizes the extent to which the assessment activities completed by a student demonstrate proficiency or competency with each learning outcome – especially those of the KU Core.”*

To see the full submission, please visit the KU Core website at <https://kucore.ku.edu/haufler-award>.

### **V. Additional UCCC Work**

Besides the annual work defined in the Charge, the UCCC also explored ways to improve:

- Communication with constituents (students, faculty, and staff)
- Data collection from a more focused survey of constituents
- Data analysis: goal completion data
- Procedural changes: voting procedures

#### **A. Communication with constituents**

##### **1. Regular email communication to constituents**

The chair of the UCCC produced a “Core Communication” email that was distributed to deans, directors, department chairs, and KU Lawrence faculty in September 2018. A second edition announced the Survey (see D below) and an additional edition appeared in February 2019. These communications are usually published at least one each semester

and are archived on the KU Core website at <https://kucore.ku.edu/ku-core-communications>.

## 2. Outreach and inclusion of Faculty Governance

Beginning in summer 2018, the chair initiated informal conversations with members of Faculty Senate hoping to find avenues to bridging perceived gaps in the communications between Governance and UCCC. These conversations continued through the academic year and produced two accomplishments:

- A representative of the Senate became an ex officio visitor to the regularly scheduled UCCC meetings (which are open meetings). The presence and participation of the representative provided eyes and ears in the UCCC meetings; helping improve the understanding of UCCC procedures and processes. The contributions from this welcomed addition to the committee table led to an important effort describe in the next item.
- A proposal to explore a process for regular review of the KU Core at a macro level was developed through the shared effort of FacEx and UCCC leadership. The approval was approved by both bodies and establishes an ad hoc committee (3 members from each group) will be selected in Fall 2019 to consider the following committee charge:
  - *The report of the ad hoc committee may include specific amendments and recommend other features of future macro review of the KU Core. These might consist of frequency (we suggest a five-year review cycle), a timeline for response to committee recommendations by Faculty Senate, UCCC and University administration, the utility of a smaller “conference” committee to resolve differences, and a timeline for the codification of amendments.*

## B. Data Collection: University Core Curriculum Survey - 2018 – 2019\*

In the fall semester of 2018, UCCC submitted an online survey to students, staff, administrators, and faculty. The survey sought different information than past surveys and received much greater participation across campus, with over 2500 responses.

One survey question was asked of all respondents. Those results included:

### 1. Q: Do you understand KU Core Curriculum requirements?

**R: Administrators** - 54% Definitely Yes; 42% Probably Yes

**R: Students** - 53% Definitely Yes; 41% Yes

**R: Advisors** - 70% Definitely Yes; 20 % Yes

Other questions sought specific information from each constituent group to help guide future discussions for KU Core improvements.

### 2. Q: Rank significance of aspects of the KU Core

(Response indicates highest rated by group)

**R: Administrators** - Core is goal Based, Core informs learning pathways, Core may improve retention/graduation rates

**R: Students** - Core Informs Learning Pathways, Core produces high-quality advising, Core allows experiences to satisfy goals

**R: Advisors** - 70% Definitely Yes; 20 % Yes

### 3. Q: Since attending KU, have you completed a course at another university or college to transfer credit to satisfy a KU Core Goal

**R: Students** - 70% Yes, 29% No

### 4. Q: Did you consult with an advisor before taking this course?

**R: Students** - 70% Yes, 30% No

### 5. Q: Why did you take a course elsewhere to satisfy a KU Core Goal?

**R: Students** - (Top responses by number)

Cost (tuition, books, fees, etc.) 676

Availability (Summer, alternative break) 469

Offered online (not KU) 298

Easier than KU course 287

### 6. Q: Approximate your time spent with students advising about aspects of the KU Core.

**R: Advisors** - (Mean response)

**Explaining how Core works** - 32%

**Goal Course selection** - 41%

**Course Replacement** (rearranging courses to satisfy goals) 31%

**Course Transfers** - 34%

**Core Goal alignment with major** - 39%

A summary of the findings was shared with the UCCC in Spring 2019 and serve the committee with ideas for more specific future study.

\*Note: The survey was not designed to provide data for valid quantitative analysis. It simply provided a broad glimpse of elements of the KU Core Curriculum.

### C. Data Analysis

The Core Curriculum was implemented in 2013, with all incoming freshmen from that point onward required to meet the goals of the curriculum. With data for students who completed their degree in four or six years, we examined 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 aggregate this data.

Data confirms the majority of completed goals were met by coursework completed at KU. The remainder of goal completion was achieved through course credits earned in transferred courses with equivalence to KU courses, approved learning experiences, or performance on the AP, IB, or CLEP exams.

### D. Procedural Changes - Voting

The committee voted to amend its rules for voting on decertification of courses. The requirement of a unanimous vote of the UCCC faculty members to decertify a course was replaced with the requirements of a recorded vote by all members (including student representatives), and a super majority tally of at least 11 of the 16 members voting to decertify.

Student representatives to UCCC have been granted full voting privileges as members of the committee. This reverses previous limits on student participation caused by inconsistent attendance, causing several failed attempts to achieve quorum. Improved commitments by Student Senate to maintain student representation led to this important improvement in the work of the Committee.

## VI. Improving Core Learning Outcome Assessment

The UCCC began exploration of ways to improve the assessment of Core Goal learning outcomes as it completed the fourth of six scheduled recertification reviews in Spring 2019. Looking ahead to the completion of the review cycle in Academic Year 2021, we expanded discussions with the Dr. Josh Potter, Education Program Manager in the KU Center for Teaching Excellence. Dr. Potter is one of the chief academic assessment professionals at KU and serves as an ex officio member of the UCCC.

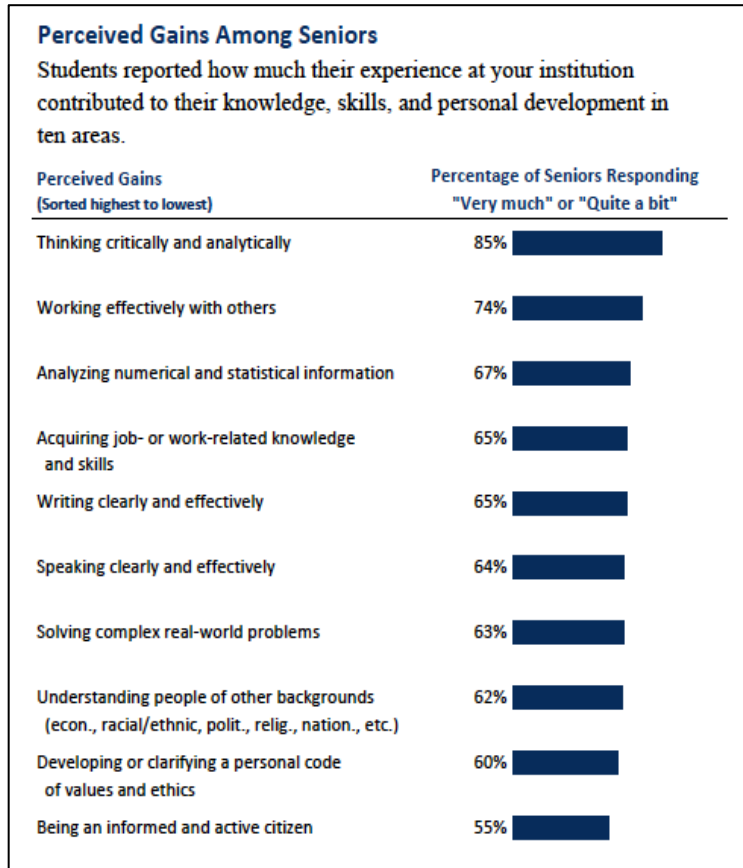
Of critical interest was comparison of assessment protocols at other Kansas state universities and at our designated peer institutions across the country, exploration of best practices for faculty participation, and identification of weaknesses within our current general education review model.

The UCCC members spoke of the importance of consistency in what is expected as useful, measurable information for each course as we conduct our scheduled review for recertification. We also examined the benefits of a variety of assessment tools from the perspective of providing actionable feedback to the instructor as well as forming the basis for continuing evaluation of the success of the KU Core as a foundational general educational model.

During the course of this work on assessment, we also reviewed the findings of the National Survey of Student Engagement Institutional Report for the University of Kansas 2018.



We were pleased to see how closely the list of top 10 Perceived Gains Among Seniors align with our KU Core Goals. Shown below are the percentage of KU Seniors responding with rating of “Very much” or “Quite a bit” to Perceived Gains matched against the following KU Core Goals:



Goal 1.1 – Critical Thinking  
Goal 1.2 – Quantitative Literacy  
Goal 2.1– Written Communication  
Goal 2.2 – Oral Communication  
Goal 3 – Breadth of Knowledge  
Goal 4.1 and 4.2 – Culture and Diversity  
Goal 5 – Social Responsibility and Ethics  
Goal 6 – Integration and Creativity

Source: <https://air.ku.edu/national-survey-student-engagement-nsse>

## VII. Recommendations for the 2018–2019 Committee

### A. Continue to refine the recertification process

In the 2018 -2019 year, the committee pursued a more proactive communication strategy with departments and was able to provide specific feedback to departments about additional information needed. This included visits by the UCCC chair with more than a dozen faculty and administrators who had questions or concerns about committee process or procedures. The leadership of UCCC also met more regularly with the leadership of CUSA to improve understanding of the Core Curriculum roles of each group.

It should be noted that the committee caucused in small groups during regularly scheduled meetings as means of engaging in face-to-face dialogue on recertification of courses. This procedure and process, put in place by the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies in 2017, also contributed greatly to improved communication and decision making among committee members.



The committee completed the recertification process in early April, providing opportunities for extensive committee discussions about how current Common Core Goals are written and how to improve constituent understanding of the purpose and processes of the KU Core.

This process should continue and gain focus as UCCC approaches the final two rounds of KU Goal course recertifications.

#### **B. Review and amend core goals as appropriate**

As a result of discussions generated by the findings of UCCC 2018 Survey of the Core, the committee began informal contemplation of where the significant needs and opportunities for Core improvement exist and how to best proceed with a public-facing process

The upcoming 2018-2019 committee will have opportunities for reviewing, adding to and adopting suggestions discussed in the prior committee year to strengthen core goals. A follow-up survey should be developed, presented, and analyzed to guide further improvement of assessment of learning outcomes.

The intent will be to look toward simplification of processes, clarification of policies and procedures, improving the consistency learning outcome language, and implementation of assessments to assure Goal achievement.

#### **C. Improve opportunities by traditionally underrepresented constituents**

The committee should seek recommendations and make possible inclusion of additional voices at our table during our important process of guiding the general education foundation of our undergraduate students. This will require important input from many corners of our campus and may necessitate consideration of policy and procedure revisions.

#### **D. Conduct outreach to departments to further strengthen communication**

Although communication has been strengthened between UCCC and university departments and schools, UCCC should consider intentional meetings with various members of multiple disciplines within the faculty community to continue to strengthen and engender trust between UCCC and the faculty.

Respectfully submitted by,



Mike Williams  
Chair, University Core Curriculum Committee 2018–2019