University Core Curriculum Committee
Annual Report 2021-2022

Introduction

The 2021-2022 academic year was eventful for the University Core Curriculum Committee (UCCC) and the KU community. After being paused during the COVID-19 pandemic, the "strategic doing" portion of KU's strategic plan, Jayhawks Rising, was launched. The objectives most closely aligned with the UCCC's work include assuring retention and completion through student engagement and satisfaction and assuring quality of academic programs. Jayhawk Global, another University initiative, was introduced in February to expand and reconceptualize the delivery of online instruction and non-credit bearing programs.

While courses returned to their original method of course delivery, the COVID-19 pandemic continued to affect KU students and personnel and campus operations. The UCCC meetings continued as scheduled but were held virtually. The virtual format was effective in conducting regular business, but the UCCC eagerly returned to in-person meetings in Fall 2022. In-person meetings allow the facilitation of more in-depth discussions related to the Kansas Board of Regents' (KBOR) updated general education policy and KU's upcoming accreditation through the Higher Learning Commission.

Special thanks to all members, and especially Holly Scheirman, KU Core Coordinator, and Suzanne McAllister, Executive Assistant for their assistance in keeping the UCCC organized and efficient in managing its business.

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;
4. Reviewing and recommending proposals for experiential learning certificate programs and approving UNIV courses; and
5. Envisioning innovative ways to meet learning outcomes.

UCCC Representation: Academic Year 2021-2022

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. Additionally, Student Senate selects student representatives to serve year-long terms. The representatives on the 2021-2022 committee included:

Name	Representing	Term
Amy Rossomondo	CLAS - Humanities Division	2021-2024
Rami Zeedan	CLAS - International & Interdisciplinary Division	2021-2024
Daniel Katz	CLAS - Natural Sciences & Mathematics Division	2021-2024
Eileen Nutting	CLAS – School of the Arts	2019-2022
Jon Brumberg	CLAS - Social & Behavioral Sciences Division	2019-2022
Gregory Crichlow	School of Architecture & Design	2019-2022
Keith Chauvin (for Allen Ford)	School of Business	2020-2023
Brian Gordan	School of Education	2020-2023
Lorin Maletsky	School of Engineering	2019-2022
Steve Wolgast	School of Journalism & Mass Communications	2021-2024
Martin Nedbal	School of Music	2020-2023
Brittany Melton	School of Pharmacy	2019-2022
Petra Horn-Marsh	School of Professional Studies	2020-2023
Juliana Carlson	School of Social Welfare	2019-2022
Juila Stopperan	Student Representative	2021-2022

Ex-officio, non-voting members on the 2021–2022 committee included:

Name	Representing
Jill Becker	Libraries
Millinda Fowles	Academic Programs & Experiential Learning
Susan Klusmeier	Academic Success
Letycia Nuñez-Argote	KU Medical Center
Jason O'Connor	Academic Advising
Holly Scheirman	KU Core Coordinator
Dawn Shew	Academic Advising
Sydney Stone	Admissions

Overseeing the Composition of the KU Core: Recertification for Goals

During 2021-2022, the committee reviewed the recertification reports for courses meeting Goal 1.1: Written Communication and Goal 1.2: Quantitative Literacy

Recertification Process Results

    Goal 1.1 – total courses reviewed: 102 courses
- Recertified: 61 courses
- Recertified with comments: 9 courses
- Decertified (by request of department): 12 courses
- Decertified (by determination of the committee): 0 courses
- No recertification required (recertified within the last year): 5
- No response from department: 15

    Goal 1.2 - total courses reviewed: 29 courses
- Recertified: 16 courses
- Recertified with comments: 0 courses
- Decertified (by request of department): 3 courses
- Decertified (by determination of the committee): 0 courses
- No recertification required (recertified within the last year): 7
- No response from department: 3

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.

All decertification decisions, regardless of the reason, will take effect Fall 2023, giving time for the department to appeal and for curricular impact to be assessed.

Courses not taught were put into a hiatus status until the courses return to circulation. These courses were not decertified. It was requested that the department notify the UCCC when the course is taught again for full re-instatement.

Overseeing the Composition of the KU Core: Course Nominations

During 2021-2022, the committee received 55 nominations for individual courses to be added to the KU Core. The actions taken on course nominations were one of three options: approve, reject, or request for more information. With a rejection, departments may appeal the decision by working with the UCCC Chair to craft a statement of appeal.

The number of courses that fell into each category were:
- Approved: 48 courses
- Rejected: 7 courses
- Request for more information: 3 courses
- Approved after appeal: 3 courses
- Rejected after appeal: 0 courses
- Study abroad experience: 0 experiences

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

Overseeing the Composition of the KU Core: Student Petitions

During 2021-2022, the committee received 99 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, rejection 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): 21 petitions
- Rejected (full committee): 13 petitions
- Approved (full committee): 65 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. The decisions on those petitions were:

- Inappropriate for the Goal (UCCC Chair): 7 petitions
- Rejected: 8 petitions
- Approved: 9 petitions

Petitions submitted due to an advising error are re-routed to FacEx.

2022 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 2022 award was presented by Provost Barbara Bichelmeyer at the Center for Teaching Excellence's annual Teaching Summit on August 19, 2022.

This year, the UCCC selected two winners: Sociology 308: Principles of Family Sociology and Philosophy 150: Philosophical communication.

- SOC 308 demystifies how sociologists produce knowledge. The course teaches underlying skills of data collection, analysis, and collaboration for students via a research project related to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a research-intensive course, it introduces primarily non-sociology students and sociology minors to social science research and provides an innovative way to facilitate student learning in KU Core Goal 3 – Social Sciences and Goal 4.1 – Diversity within the U.S. The course is taught by Dr. Kevin McCannon.

- Dr. Sarah Robins developed PHIL 150 in response to her work advising students and her awareness of the lack of Goal 2.2 courses available. Professor Robins set out to design a course focused on oral communication that emphasizes the oral and meta-cognitive skills that are not typically taught in introductory courses. Not only does the course teach students the lifeblood of philosophy – discussion, dialogue, and debate – but it exposes students to the discipline as a means of recruitment for majors and minors alike.

Additional UCCC Work

In addition to the activities outlined above, the UCCC worked to improve processes and procedures, participated in committees discussing transferability of courses among KBOR institutions, and reviewed courses for the UNIV curriculum. More details are outlined below.

Experiences

Throughout the pandemic the UCCC saw an increase in the number of students proposing experiences to meet core requirements. The UCCC developed a consistent process to better assess the experiences being proposed and to ensure students were effectively meeting the learning outcomes associated with the goals. Resources were created to help students and advisors understand when and how to submit an experience for KU Core credit and when students should enroll in a pre-existing KU course. The process also included the addition of zero credit hour UNIV courses in which students who are approved for an experience will be enrolled if there was no pre-existing course already tied to their experience. These courses will be conducted asynchronously through a Canvas site, which will include modules that support student learning by providing helpful content and requiring thorough reflections about the experience. As of Fall 2022, students approved to have an experience count for Goals 4.1, 4.2, 5.2, 6.1, and 6.2 without a pre-existing course will be enrolled in the corresponding UNIV course.

KBOR General Education Requirements

KBOR formed a working group representing a variety of stakeholders for the various KBOR institutions to review general education requirement models across the country, solicit feedback from their institutions, and propose a general education model eases transferability of credits between KBOR institutions. KU's Provost, Barbara Bichelmeyer, served as the co-chair of the KBOR working group. In response, KU established its own working group to consider KBOR's charge from the institutional perspective. Vice Provost for Academic Success, Susan Klusmeier, chaired this committee, and the UCCC chair served as a member. In June 2022, KBOR approved a new systematic general education program to be implemented by all KBOR institutions by Fall 2024.

Dashboard

In the Spring of 2022, Vice Provost Klusmeier initiated a project with Analytics, Institutional Research, and Effectiveness (AIRE) to create detailed KU Core dashboards accessible to a variety of campus stakeholders. The dashboards will offer enhanced transparency surrounding KU Core Goals and the courses that fulfill them; improve campus partners' understanding of Core requirements and course availability; and develop strategies for enrollment management, course availability, and meeting KBOR requirements.

UNIV Curriculum Committee

The UCCC serves as the curriculum committee for UNIV courses, which are operated by Academic Programs and Experiential Learning (APEL), a unit within Academic Success. The first-year courses in APEL's portfolio are included in Jayhawks Rising. The UCCC approved the offering of a new course, UNIV 105, dedicated to assisting students who are struggling academically. The course will be offered during the 2022-2023 academic year.

Recommendations from the 2021–2022 Committee

KBOR Alignment

In addition to its normal activities for reviewing course nominations, recertifications, and student petitions, the UCCC will spend the majority of the 2022-2023 academic year developing a proposal for the KU Core to align with the KBOR general education requirements. The KU Core will continue to serve

as the general education framework for the University. The UCCC is charged with identifying the best alignment between KU Core goals with the KBOR Statewide General Education discipline areas. The Provost requested a draft proposal be completed by Spring 2023. This alignment process offers the UCCC the opportunity to further evaluate some of the policies, procedures, practices, and precedents that have been established since the KU Core was implemented.

Streamline Assessment and Recertification Process

Currently, the assessment of the KU Core Curriculum is managed by the Office of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Graduate Studies and differs from recertification of courses included in the KU Core. The assessment and recertification processes follow the same time cycle, but the processes are managed independently by two different faculty committees. This year's assessment of goals 1.1 and 1.2 emphasized the potential need to reimagine how these two processes are working.

Improve Participation

The UCCC needs to examine ways to address the lack of diversity of faculty and student representatives on the committee. The past procedures for selection of committee members – by academic unit elections and Student Senate appointments – has not matched the University efforts to improve equity and inclusion on campus.

Outreach to diversity, equity and inclusion groups (faculty and student) in each school and the college could generate creative strategies for improvement.

This should be a major element of future revision of the KU Core procedures, or the replacement general education policies.

Respectfully submitted by,

Jonathan Brumberg, PhD, Associate Professor
Chair, University Core Curriculum Committee 2021–2022