



GENERAL EDUCATION REFORM RECOMMENDATIONS

May 14, 2010

RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT FROM THE GENERAL EDUCATION ADVISORY TASK FORCE TO PROVOST HACKETT

This is a final report of background information and recommendations based on the work of the General Education Advisory Task Force.

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- Kim Bray – School of Dentistry
- Tim Timmons – Conservatory of Music and Dance
- Deborah O'Bannon – School of Computing and Engineering
- Lynda Plamann – School of Biological Sciences
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REVIEW OF TASK FORCE WORK

Dr. Carol Geary Schneider visited UMKC in September 2009 to discuss general education and the national consensus and support for the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) Outcomes. She also shared the ways institutions are using the AAC&U LEAP Outcomes as a framework for campus specific general education program student learning outcomes. AAC&U publications (*High Impact Educational Practices and Revising General Education: And Avoiding the Potholes*) served to guide initial conversations for the task force. Dr. Schneider met with faculty to answer questions following her presentation and held discussion sessions with deans and department/division chairs regarding national efforts associated with general education program reform efforts.

Following Dr. Schneider's campus visit, Provost Hackett formed, convened and charged the General Education Advisory Task Force (see Appendix A). The role of this task force was to develop a strategy for the creation of a "new" UMKC general education program and ideas for revision of the general education program based on reviewing a variety of sources focused on quality general education programs. Provost Hackett emphasized that general education review and revision will be a *faculty-driven process*. This task force approached the charge by gathering information about best practices and successful reform processes found to be effective at other institutions. The initial documents the task force reviewed included AAC&U publications, the Higher Learning Commission statement on General Education, the CBHE General Education transfer articulation competencies and UMKC compliance matrix. Internal and external experts were invited to share their experiences related to General Education. Jennifer DeHaemers shared background information on the 42 hour block transfer as well as issues associated with transfer students. Michael Strait gave a presentation on the work of the UMKC assessment committee and the draft of the campus wide student learning outcomes document. He also described the work of the Learning Assessment in Missouri Post Secondary Imperatives for Change (LAMP) group and also the ongoing work focused at the state level on the Curriculum Alignment Initiative (CAI). Wayne Vaught reported on previous efforts to revise the general education requirements in the College of Arts and Sciences. External experts Drs. Mitchell and Kean from the University of Nebraska shared their campus experiences with the general education program revision process and outcomes. Particularly interesting was Nebraska's use of a Web-based submission and review system for course consideration which facilitated the revision process.

In addition to consulting the literature and experts in areas related to general education, the task force members used our aspirational peer universities and universities identified as

having quality programs and reviewed their general education programs and revision processes, where applicable. Task force members summarized and reported their findings at task force meetings. These reviews and reports are found at the following web site along with the additional resources the members utilized during their work

(<http://www.umkc.edu/provost/committees/general-education-advisory-task-force/default.asp>).

Early in the work the task force decided to submit a proposal for participation in the AAC&U General Education Institute. The purpose of the institute is to work with other institutions and experts from across the nation to finalize an optimal process for successful campus level general education program revision. The institute proposal review was a competitive process and UMKC was extended an invitation to participate in the June 2010 institute. A small team of task force members, university administrators, and other faculty will attend the institute.

The task force thought it was important to develop a rationale for the general education program review and revision and for this to be shared with their faculty. In as many academic units as possible, this rationale was presented at faculty meetings prior to the end of this semester. In conjunction with the rationale, the task force developed a set of guiding principles as recommendations for the campus in revising the general education program. These principles are based on the information reviewed and analyzed by the task force. Several additional recommendations are being made by the task force related to the revision process. The task force also collected initial feedback from small groups of students, advisors, and faculty regarding the existing general education experience in an effort to provide future work groups with helpful information (see Appendix C & D). We request this information not be shared publicly since the participants were not informed of this prior to their participation.

RATIONALE FOR REVISION OF GENERAL EDUCATION AT UMKC

The following is the rationale and pertinent background information shared with many faculty groups:

WHAT IS GENERAL EDUCATION?

Although there is no one true meaning of the term general education, a one-page summary* published by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) provides a view that is shared by many in the academy. This outline of student learning goals acknowledges national concerns regarding achievement shortfalls among our nation's students in the skills and knowledge to prepare them for the challenges of life in the twenty-first century. These include

- Knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world through studies in math, science, humanities, and the arts;
- Intellectual and practical skills including critical and creative thinking, effective written and oral communication, information literacy, teamwork and problem solving;
- Personal and social responsibility including intercultural competence and civic knowledge and engagement at the local and global levels;
- Integrative and applied learning.

General education should not be something to simply "get out of the way." While breadth of knowledge is important, it is widely recognized that other qualities and skills are important components of general education. According to the AAC&U, more than 70 percent of employers want colleges to place more emphasis on science and technology, global learning, teamwork skills in diverse groups, written and oral communication and applied knowledge in real world settings.

According to the Higher Learning Commission Statement on General Education (Feb. 21, 2003) "... general education is intended to impart common knowledge and intellectual concepts to student and to develop in them the skills and attitudes that an organization's faculty believe every educated person should possess."

"Moreover, effective general education helps students gain competence in the exercise of independent intellectual inquiry and also stimulates their examination and understanding of personal, social, and civic values."

"General education must be valued and owned by the organization ..."

WHAT IS GENERAL EDUCATION AT UMKC?

A 2009 review has revealed that there is no common general education program that is required for all UMKC students. Students seeking a baccalaureate degree are required to complete a minimum of 42 semester hours of credit that is distributed across a set of skill and knowledge areas. These areas include communication, higher-order thinking (mathematics, managing information, and valuing), social and behavioral sciences, and humanities and fine arts. Although the requirements are commonly referred to as “the 42-hour block,” the actual number of credit hours needed to complete the general education requirements varies widely among programs.

WHY REVISE GENERAL EDUCATION AT UMKC?

Revising general education would:

- simplify the general education requirements, facilitating transfer from other higher education institutions. In fall 2009 and spring 2010, a combined total of 1090 students transferred to UMKC from area community colleges.
- lower the barrier that prevents students from exploring alternative majors. Each academic unit (or program within an academic unit) has its own set of general education requirements, which may hinder students who change majors into an academic unit or program with different general education requirements. Similarly, students are discouraged from seeking a double major that crosses academic units because they may be required to meet the requirement of both units.
- provide an opportunity to tie the undergraduate experience to the strengths of our faculty and our unique university mission, which is “to lead in life and health sciences; to deepen and expand strength in the visual and performing arts; to develop a professional workforce and collaborate in urban issues and education; and to create a vibrant learning and campus life experience.”
- increase student engagement with our unique university mission, potentially increasing student retention and persistence. The university seeks to raise the current six-year graduation rate, which is approximately 45 percent, to 50 percent, and to increase freshman to sophomore persistence from 74 to 80 percent.
- ensure alignment with state and national guidelines for general education.
- provide an opportunity to define the student learning goals for general education and the mechanisms to assess the achievement of the goals so that continuous improvements can be made.

Institutions that have been successful in revising their general education program engaged the entire faculty in developing the structure, content, and implementation of a single program for general education. The status of general education programs and their effectiveness in preparing “educated persons” is a national topic of continued discussion and debate. New approaches and new models are being developed by institutions of higher education and are being shared widely. The recent report from the Higher Learning Commission site visit team regarding the status of academic programs at UMKC indicates that “. . . it is advisable for the university to actively engage in discussion and revision of the general education curriculum to ensure its relevance to skills needed to function in contemporary society.”

(http://www.umkc.edu/accreditation/docs/selfstudy09/HLC_2009_FinalReport.pdf).

Additionally, as we focus more institutional attention and effort on addressing student academic success, retention and graduation, systematically reviewing and revising the general education program will be an integral component to these strategies.

** The list of Essential Learning Outcomes has been documented in several publications by the AAC&U: Greater Expectations: A New Vision for Learning as a Nation Goes to College (2002), Taking Responsibility for the Quality of the Baccalaureate Degree (2004), Liberal Education Outcomes: A Preliminary Report on Achievement in College (2005), and High-Impact Educational Practices: What They Are, Who Has Access to Them, and Why They Matter (2008).*

RECOMMENDATIONS

UMKC GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The task force recommends to the Provost that the following guiding principles be used as the campus undertakes general education program revision:

Revision of the UMKC general education program should be guided by the following principles:

- The UMKC general education program should be based on measurable student learning outcomes
- Students should understand what our UMKC general education program is and why it is important
- The UMKC general education program should help students integrate what they learn throughout their education and their lives
- The UMKC general education program should be shared by all undergraduate programs

- The UMKC general education program should be simple to understand by undergraduate students, faculty and staff, and easy to administer
- The UMKC general education program should facilitate advising for all undergraduate students (e.g., transfer students, distance students, diverse students, non-traditional students, etc.)
- The UMKC general education program should enhance the undergraduate experience by accentuating UMKC's mission areas and the opportunities provided by the Kansas City metro area. (UMKC is a unique land-grant institution embedded in an urban setting.)
- The UMKC general education program should provide the opportunity for continuous review to reflect the changing UMKC culture and the needs of the changing global community
- The UMKC general education program should be harmonious with academic program accreditation requirements

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Additionally, the task force recommends groups involved with the general education revision work closely with the University Assessment Committee and the Undergraduate Curriculum Committees to keep them informed of revision process and implementation strategies. It is suggested the Director of University Assessment be consulted and/or involved in the revision to ensure assessment of the general education program is of sufficient quality and is compliant with HLC expectations.

The task force recommends that elected faculty from every academic unit be represented on future committees involved in the revision and approval process and the process be as transparent as possible to the university community. Feedback and input about the general education program at UMKC should include input from students, faculty, student affairs staff, advisors (professional staff and faculty), administrators and external university constituents (where appropriate).

The task force discussions emphasized the importance of designing a general education program that takes into consideration overall faculty workload issues, program transition plans and implementation strategies. Faculty development opportunities and support for the teaching activities in the revised program, including student learning outcome assessment is important for student success and should be a high priority.

As a general principle for the revision process; it should be inclusionary and interactive. The campus plan for revision of the general education program should be widely shared and affirmed, with incremental ratification of the new general education plan by the UMKC faculty.

The members of the General Education Advisory Task Force are willing to serve as a continual resource for future groups as they work on the general education program revision and will provide orientation to those groups regarding “best practices” and lessons learned via this review process. The task force has created a wealth of helpful information that can be readily accessed on the Provost’s web site.

The planning document(s) developed by the UMKC representatives attending the AAC&U General Education Institute should be used as a basis for the work of future committees.

The task force would like to thank the Provost for the opportunity to serve our students in advancing the revision of the general education program with the intent of improving the relevance and excellence of the educational experience at UMKC.

APPENDIX A

GENERAL EDUCATION ADVISORY TASK FORCE CHARGE

October 5, 2009

The General Education Advisory Committee is charged with developing a strategy/plan for the creation and implementation of a “new” UMKC general education program that is tied to our UMKC mission, puts student success and student retention as a focus, includes a premier student learning assessment component and has an ongoing review and revision cycle. This plan will be submitted to the Provost as a recommendation.

THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE WILL INCLUDE:

Reviewing current national perspectives regarding general education experiences for undergraduate students in higher education, including: AAC&U’s position statements and publications, reviewing aspirational peer institutions’ general education and assessment programs and reviewing programs at institutions deemed to be exemplars of “best practices” associated with general education and student learning outcome assessment associated with general education programs.

Reviewing current work in the state of Missouri regarding entrance and exit competencies (CAI) and consider this work in the revision of the UMKC general education program.

Reviewing any additional relevant material to assist in the development of an outstanding general education program.

Developing and implementing a plan for engaging the university campus in discussions regarding the revision of UMKC’s general education program.

Maintaining student engagement and student retention concerns at the forefront of general education plans, including the development of a unique “UMKC” student experience in general education tied to the university mission.

Preparing a written proposal for submission to the AAC&U General Education Summer Institute focused on our UMKC campus revision efforts.

RATIONALE FOR GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM REVIEW AND REVISION:

Our current UMKC general education program consists of “no” coherent university wide undergraduate experience. There is no common general education program that is currently required of “all” UMKC students. The current general education requirements virtually prohibit students from exploring a number of majors early in their undergraduate experience and penalizes students for changing majors. The current complicated program is difficult for transfer students to understand, making the transfer process more difficult. There is no tie of our undergraduate experience to our unique university mission to increase student engagement and student success. There is no common set of student learning outcomes for the program and no assessment program to identify strengths and weaknesses for our students or for the program, as a whole. There is no articulated connection between our general education program and our academic majors.

APPENDIX B

APPLICATION TO AAC&U 2010 INSTITUTE ON GENERAL EDUCATION UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI – KANSAS CITY

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSITY

The University of Missouri at Kansas City is a mid-sized, urban land grant university with approximately 15,000 students awarding degrees ranging from the bachelors degree through the doctoral degree, and also offers first professional degrees. The University of Missouri at Kansas City has an extraordinary range of academic units and programs, including the School of Dentistry; School of Nursing; School of Pharmacy; School of Medicine; School of Law; Conservatory of Music and Dance; School of Computing and Engineering; School of Biological Sciences; College of Arts and Sciences; School of Education; and the Henry W. Bloch School of Business and Public Administration. The mission for the university is to lead in life and health sciences; to deepen and expand strength in the visual and performing arts; to develop a professional workforce and collaborate in urban issues and education; and to create a vibrant learning and campus life experience. The vision for the university is to become a model urban research university characterized by signature graduate and professional programs, a dynamic undergraduate population, a highly diverse faculty, staff and student body, and active engagement with its city and region. The institution is comprised of academic units, many of which were originally stand alone higher education entities that merged to form one institution of higher education which was integrated into the University of Missouri system as one of the four campuses of the University of Missouri. The University of Missouri at Kansas City was formed and merged into the University of Missouri system in 1963. Historically, the University of Missouri at Kansas City has focused more on its graduate and professional programs, than on its undergraduate programs. This background and history of the university influences our existing culture and practice today. In many instances, the individual Schools/College are more widely known than the university as a whole. This history has also contributed to institutional practices and decision making processes that are decentralized. Recent strategic planning has lead to decisions that will focus the university on growing the undergraduate student population, particularly the first time, full-time student population.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS AND STUDENT SUCCESS INFORMATION

Approximately 60 percent (N=8,000) of our students are undergraduates. The Fall 2009 entering freshman class consisted of 1100 students, with approximately 900 of those undergraduate students entering as first-time, full-time college students and approximately 1000 of our undergraduate students coming to our university as transfer students. Our campus-based student minority population is approximately 30 percent. Our undergraduate student first time, full-time retention rate is 74 percent and our undergraduate first time, full-time six year graduation rate is 45 percent.

Need: What is your current general education model and what has motivated a desire for redesign? Have assessment results prompted the review or do you need help creating an assessment plan? What work already has been accomplished and by whom? What resource or political issues are at play in the process? Has a unified vision of the planned redesign emerged?

- **Current general education model.** Current requirements reflect a decentralized approach using a menu driven option for selection by students. The current requirements for general education have been established by each academic unit (College/School) and range between approximately 24 to 66 credit hours. The overall review of the current general education requirements found in each of the nine academic schools/college with undergraduate degree programs demonstrated there were only two common requirements across all academic units. Those common requirements include a writing course and a course focused on the United States and state constitution. The later course is mandated by state law.
- **Motivation for redesign.** The existing general education requirements are not clearly tied to our unique university mission and do not help our student persistence and degree completion rates. Our requirements do not necessarily reflect the current national learning objectives, as reflected in the LEAP Initiative. The institution, as a whole, has not systematically reviewed the undergraduate general education requirements, however, individual academic units (schools/college) have reviewed and revised general education requirements due primarily to discipline specific accreditation changes/ requirements and/or faculty/student identified needs and concerns. The lack of a coherent general education program poses a potential barrier for students who are “undecided” or who decide to change their degree program during the course of their studies. Students in these two situations often have to take additional coursework to satisfy a “new” set of general education requirements for their “new” degree program. The current structure of

our program is a problem when we are trying to develop articulation agreements with community college partners resulting in multiple agreements rather than one common agreement. The diversity of requirements compounds our challenges when assessing student learning and general education program outcomes.

- **Assessment results.** The current assessment of our general education program consists of using the MAPP (Measure of Academic Proficiency and Progress/ETS Proficiency Profile). The systematic use of these data for curricular revision is not an institutionalized process. The timing of student assessment does not accurately reflect knowledge acquisition and is problematic. However, the MAPP is a mandated graduation requirement. A new assessment plan will need to be developed in conjunction with any revision in our current general education requirements.
- **Work accomplished.** There has been no sustained effort for campus-wide revision of the general education requirements, although the College of Arts and Sciences and the School of Education have revised aspects of their respective requirements during the past 20 years. Most recently (within the last 5 years), the College of Arts and Sciences has discussed a revised general education curriculum reflecting an integrated experience for students with student learning objectives addressing broad learning areas rather than discipline focused courses. In Fall, 2009 the Provost appointed the General Education Advisory Task Force made up of members representing each academic unit (School/College). The charge for the task force was to develop a strategy/plan for the creation and implementation of a “new” UMKC general education program that is tied to our UMKC mission, puts student success and student retention as a focus, includes a premier student learning assessment component and has an ongoing review and revision cycle. This plan will be submitted to the Provost as a recommendation. The work of the committee will include:
 - Reviewing current national perspectives regarding general education experiences for undergraduate students in higher education, including: AAC&U’s position statements and publications, reviewing aspirational peer institutions’ general education and assessment programs and reviewing programs at institutions deemed to be exemplars of “best practices” associated with general education and student learning outcome assessment associated with general education programs.
 - Reviewing current work in the state of Missouri regarding entrance and exit competencies (CAI) and consider this work in the revision of the UMKC general education program.
 - Reviewing any additional relevant material to assist in the development of an outstanding general education program.

- Developing and implementing a plan for engaging the university campus in discussions regarding the revision of UMKC's general education program.
- Maintaining student engagement and student retention concerns at the forefront of general education plans, including the development of a unique "UMKC" student experience in general education tied to the university mission.
- Preparing a written proposal for submission to the AAC&U General Education Summer Institute focused on our UMKC campus revision efforts.

The task force has been meeting regularly (twice monthly) since mid October to review national trends, employer feedback, current general education model programs and programs at aspirational peer institutions. This review has focused on gaining knowledge about the content of general education programs as well as a focus on the process of general education revision.

- **Political issues and resources.** This concern was identified in our recent strategic planning efforts and the Provost has made this initiative a major campus priority. The state of Missouri Department of Higher Education (in 2005) implemented an approach to facilitate student transfer of general education credit hours through the identification of general education goals and competencies including skills areas (communicating, higher-order thinking, managing information, valuing) and knowledge areas (social and behavioral sciences, humanities and fine arts, mathematics and life and physical sciences). Institutions of higher education throughout the state were invited to adopt this framework and to identify campus level coursework associated with every goal/competency area and associated assessment strategies. During a recent site visit by the Higher Learning Commission, it was noted that the general education program needed review and revision and should include a comprehensive assessment plan tied to student learning outcomes. A newly implemented responsibility centered management budgeting model has created numerous issues for the academic units and has consequences for academic program and curricular revisions. There are also common concerns related to potential changes that may impact existing requirements, academic discipline major requirements and the possibility of increasing general education program hours. The current fiscal climate in the state is challenging and does not look like it will improve in the near future. This situation will have a negative impact on the university budget outlook and will need to be considered as we move forward in our revision.

GOALS

- **Institute priorities.** Our institutional team will focus on creating a general education program plan focused on the process of program revision. Our team will be learning from the interactive presentations from the Institute faculty and from fellow colleagues participating in the institute.
- **High-priority tasks.** Our team will establish a general education revision process plan including developing a communications plan, a ratification plan, a proposed governance structure, a proposed course approval process, an implementation plan and an assessment framework.

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONS FOR GENERAL EDUCATION FOCUS GROUPS

FOR STUDENTS:

- Describe why you think students are required to take courses in a general education program?
- Describe your experience with general education courses?
- What is general education at UMKC?
- Where are you in your academic program of study? What is your major?
- Have you changed majors while at UMKC? Did you have to change schools/colleges? Did you have any issues/difficulties?
- If you were a transfer student, did you have any issues getting courses to meet general education requirements to transfer?
- Other strengths or weaknesses of the UMKC general education program/courses?

FOR ADVISORS:

- What are the most common issues for students with respect to general education requirements?
- What do you think the role of general education is for students at UMKC?
- For transfer students, talk about what kinds of experiences students have with the general education program and/or courses. How do those experiences compare to students who begin at UMKC?
- Other strengths or weaknesses of the UMKC general education program/courses?

APPENDIX D

SUMMARY – COMMENTS FROM MEETINGS WITH FACULTY, STAFF AND STUDENT MEETINGS WITH FACULTY:

SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY (KIM BRAY):

I did not have any discussion with advisors. I did present to the SOD faculty and all seemed supportive of the concept. The major effects would be on our undergraduate transfer students and the impact on the preparation of our pre-doctoral dental students.

SCHOOL OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES (LYNDA PLAMANN):

Lynda Plamann presented the Rationale for Revision document to the SBS faculty at their April faculty meeting. The faculty seemed supportive for general education revision. One faculty member expressed an interest in participating in the revision process.

PHARMACY (LINDA GARAVALIA):

At the April 7 faculty meeting, Linda Garavalia provided a copy of the rationale for General Education revision at UMKC to the School of Pharmacy faculty. She reviewed the document and a couple of faculty members had questions related to how the revision would impact the School of Pharmacy. No one expressed concern or lack of support for the concept of revising general education requirements for the university.

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES (WAYNE VAUGHT):

I was unable to attend the A&S faculty meeting so could not present it there (though there were very few there anyway). I did present to the A&S chairs and sent an email out with our summary points for gen eds and requested feedback. I have received very little.

The general comments I have heard from faculty include:

- Good to minimize unnecessary hardships for students seeking double majors
- General education requirements should be modernized to meet student needs
- There is nothing wrong, in general, with our current requirements
- General Education must be faculty driven (faculty choose the curriculum)

SCHOOL OF COMPUTING AND ENGINEERING (DEB O'BANNON):

Produced PowerPoint presentation and posted for faculty to review at SCE picnic. Received only a few comments.

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION (CHERYL GROSSMAN):

Presented the rationale for revision to SOE Faculty, and all were enthusiastic and some expressed interest in becoming involved as the process continues

CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC AND DANCE (TIM TIMMONS):

Mentioned the work of the Task Force thus far and encouraged faculty to review the Task Force's web site and consider how non-major courses may be revamped to be included in the General Education Curriculum.

MEETING WITH ADVISORS:

CAS (L. GARAVALLA AND W. VAUGHT):

Date: Thursday, April 22, 8-9 am. Eight advisors participated; Wayne Vaught and Linda Garavalia facilitated

- Lots of discussion around the foreign language requirement. Three semesters feels burdensome to students. Other institutions often only require 2 semesters. Our requirement of 3 semesters can be a deal breaker for some students. They may choose a BS program, the BLA, or transfer to another institution to avoid the requirement.
 - Important to learn foreign language, but 3 semesters is not enough to learn the language and it's overkill for gaining cultural awareness/appreciation. What goal are we meeting with that requirement?
 - What happened when the school of ed changed its foreign language requirement? Check with them to see how that impacted retention and recruitment.
- Logical reasoning requirement – used to count quantitative analysis or stats, but now we don't. Courses seem similar/redundant. Should count for that requirement.
- Lots of discussion about underprepared students

- Need to calculate our admissions ACT average without med students and other professional students to get a more accurate picture of our students
- Students 5 years post-high school are not required to take ACT (they may petition to waive the ACT) so we are not screening adequately and end up with a large number of underprepared students.
- Psych 210 is too advanced for many of our students because it is so reading intensive. Most of our students have no familiarity with the concepts prior to 210 and it's overwhelming.
- Students are underprepared for even our lowest level math and English courses. Need better screening prior to admission (e.g. Nelson Denney, Compass) for accurate placement into classes. Perhaps create an agreement with MCC where they offer developmental courses to UMKC students on UMKC campus. Students want to go to school here and don't want to take remedial courses elsewhere. Need to figure out how to meet students needs (low tuition for those courses, on UMKC campus, adequately prepare students for UMKC entry level courses) and work within university constraints (available classroom space, use of campus resources with possibly no remuneration for UMKC).
- Consider using placement tests to accurately place students in math, science, and English classes (similar to above bullet)
- We have some students that are in a cycle of being admitted, becoming academically ineligible, regaining eligibility, failing again, etc. How do we help those students?
- Advisors said they generally like the College's gen ed requirements.
- Suggestion to have different unit requirements on top of the gen ed requirements. E.g., foreign language might be something required by the College, but not the Bloch school.
- Philosophy requirement is an issue. Transfer students often have taken an ethics course but it doesn't transfer in as our philosophy requirement. It might come in as an elective. It's often a 200 at a community college so it doesn't have a 'number' when it transfers in here.
- Question was raised about what would happen to departments like Foreign Languages if the gen ed requirements change. One possibility is that fewer part-time faculty would be necessary and more full-time faculty would be teaching introductory courses.

- Question about how the Conservatory would integrate the gen ed requirements. They have so few so this would be a big change for their majors.
- The computer requirement is generally good, but we don't serve students well in this area. The A&S 100 course counts, but doesn't necessarily include anything about computers. Need to have clear goals and expectations for the content of courses that fulfill the requirement.
 - A lot of our students don't have access to computers at home so it's imperative that we provide basic information (how to turn it on, Microsoft office software use, email, etc.). Students with more advanced skill should be able to take more advanced courses (e.g. web design). We need to expand our offerings here.
- Look at Missouri State's program for the 2 hr freshmen course. Lots of interesting components. Peer teaching. Team teaching with faculty providing lectures from across campus. Advising. Learning skills.
- If we can reduce the College gen ed requirements from 60 to 42, students will have more opportunity to identify dual majors and pursue interests.
- What do students say about gen ed requirements?
 - We're never going to use this stuff.
 - Just tell me what I need to take.
 - Electives are viewed as "extra." Why do I need to take courses beyond the identified required courses?
 - Gen eds are 'pesky'
- Most complaints are from transfer students. Transfer students tend to fall through the cracks. No official orientation for them. Look at UMSL for example of school that does a good job of identifying courses that will transfer from a wide range of institutions. (Transfer equivalency screen). Lots of transfer students don't talk to advisors until the end of their program and then they're disappointed to learn they have to take additional courses.
- Other universities, like KU, have broader program offerings so they accept courses that UMKC won't accept (e.g. fashion design).

GENERAL EDUCATION RESPONSES FROM CONSERVATORY ADVISORS

1. *What are the most common issues for students with respect to general education requirements?*

The Conservatory has so few gen eds. That if students double major or transfer to another degree the feel they are behind.

Students transferring from another degree or another institution into the Conservatory often have gen eds that will not count on their Conservatory degree.

Students have trouble scheduling gen ed courses into their busy schedules along with their major area courses.

2. *What do you think the role of general education requirements is for students at UMKC?*

To provide a rounded education and not just focus on a Major area

To give students basic skills for employment

A broad knowledge base helps students put music and dance into cultural and historical context. It helps them develop critical thinking skills that not only help them with their career as a student, but also with whatever professional career they ultimately pursue.

By having knowledge in a variety of disciplines they are able to utilize and learn transferable skills which helps set a good foundation for their future careers

3. *For transfer students talk about what kinds of experiences students have with the general education program and/of courses. How do those experiences compare to students who begin at UMKC?*

Extremely varied. I've found that it often depends on the individual student and the institution from which the student is transferring. Some transfer students are pleasantly surprised that they have already completed the gen ed requirements, while some are frustrated that they have several gen ed courses that do not apply towards a Conservatory degree.

For transfer students it can be difficult to navigate the process and understanding of having courses transfer in. There is also the frustration that these students might have

if they have taken a lot of general education coursework and is not on the degree program that they are pursuing here at UMKC`

4. *Other strengths and weaknesses of the UMKC general education program/courses?*

Could the WEPT exam somehow be incorporated into the curriculum for ENG 225

I think the Conservatory has been allowed to count certain required music courses in place of some gen eds as our degrees are very intense is a strength. That being said I am always concerned that some of our degrees don not really have any math and science classes.

It seems that current Gen eds do relate and support the major classes.

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION (CHERYL GROSSMAN)

What are the most common issues for students with respect to general education requirements?

- When courses are offered. There is one offering each semester and that makes scheduling difficult for the non-traditional student.
- Inconsistent time offerings from semester to semester. If the master schedule could be prepared in advance and remain consistent, that would help students with pre-planning
- General education courses do not teach students how to write
- Students do not come to us with the necessary skills to be successful in their field (pass the C-base)

What do you think the role of general education is for students at UMKC?

- To develop a foundation of knowledge for upper level courses
- Act as a filter for those who are not ready for college, but the course should bring students up to a basic level to pass the course –those who need remediation should be provided support
- To develop a universal body of knowledge
- Transfer the culture and values of the mission statement of UMKC

For transfer students, talk about what kinds of experiences students have with the general education program and/or courses. How do those experiences compare to students who begin at UMKC?

- Our native students are younger, less likely to have a full time job and are more flexible. Our non-traditional students are older, working at least part time and less flexible. We have not noticed much difference in experiences related to general education. The transfer students *seem* to be as successful as those who start here.
- All students would prefer to have their general education courses more focused and more relevant to their major.
- Other strengths or weaknesses of the UMKC general education program/courses?

Strengths and weaknesses

Strength:

- Strength: There isn't a rigid core curriculum for UMKC. The majors come up with the requirements. This is transfer student friendly.

Weakness:

- The above is also a weakness because if the student wants to "try out" courses that apply for one major, and he/she doesn't pursue the major, those credits may be lost.
- Weakness: General education requirements do not include courses from all Schools.
- Weakness: Clear and decisive articulation agreements are not always current.
- Weakness: General education courses are often taught by graduate assistants who are only here for one semester are not invested in their teaching. Of course this doesn't necessarily imply that a professor will be a stellar teacher.

FOR STUDENTS:

Describe why you think students are required to take courses in a general education program?

- To be well rounded
- To get a balanced education
- To discover what you are good at
- To meet the requirement

Describe your experience with general education courses?

- Classes are too large
- Some classes were not challenging
- Low standards
- Professors were not personable
- Felt like a number
- Courses with service component were excellent
- Not a good experience. A lot of memorization.
- Memorizing periodic tables was not relevant to my major or life in general

What is general education at UMKC?

- Math, science, English, economics, Spanish, psychology—everything I had to take in high school, but harder
- A review of high school classes with bigger classes

Where are you in your academic program of study? What is your major?

- Music (1): graduate
- Education (5) Three will graduate this May 2 ; two ,next May

Have you changed majors while at UMKC? Did you have to change schools/colleges? Did you have any issues/difficulties?

- Not applicable

If you were a transfer student, did you have any issues getting courses to meet general education requirements to transfer?

- Not at UMKC. I was in marketing and changed to middle school math
- Not at UMKC. I was in architecture. I change to elementary education.
- Some classes did not transfer.
- I switched advisors. One told me that I was on the right path; the other told me I had to take additional hours.
- A lot transferred well
- I was an education major at the University of Northern Iowa and I had to take a whole bunch of other courses

Other strengths or weaknesses of the UMKC general education program/courses?

Strengths:

- Allowed me to take courses elsewhere that were less expensive
- Immersion course with “hands-on component were strong, not enough
- Like the availability, days and times

Weaknesses:

- No fast track courses (3-8 weeks)
- Large class size
- Lots of memorization- little thinking.
- Language barriers especially in math and science
- Not much in–depth interaction with professors or other students
- No application to major
- One student summed up: Common thread seems to be “no relevance, no motivation on the part of students”

APPENDIX E

TASK FORCE MEETING DATES

- September 3, 2009 – Dr. Carol Geary Schneider, campus visit
- October 5, 2009 – first meeting with Provost Hackett regarding committee charge
- October 23, 2009
- November 18, 2009
- December 16, 2009
- January 5, 2010
- January 19, 2010
- February 2, 2010
- February 16, 2010
- March 2, 2010 – meeting with R. Kean and N. Mitchell from the University of Nebraska
- March 16, 2010
- April 6, 2010
- April 20, 2010
- May 4, 2010