

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI – KANSAS CITY
RESPONSE TO HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION
SITE VISIT TEAM DRAFT REPORT – 2009

Assurance Section

I. CONTEXT AND NATURE OF VISIT

B. Organizational Context

Paragraph 1: “It is one of the universities governed by the University of Missouri System Board of Curators (9 members) who are appointed by the Governor with advice and consent of the State’s Senate.”

Suggested rewording: “... (9 members and a non-voting student member)....”

<http://www.umsystem.edu/ums/curators/members/>

IV. FULFILLMENT OF THE CRITERIA

CRITERION ONE

1. Evidence that Core Components are met

Paragraph 11: “In response to the recent lawsuit confirming the inappropriate behavior on the part of a few UMKC faculty members, the university implemented an Unlawful Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Non-Supervisory Seminar.”

Response: This lawsuit was settled out of court on the advice of the University’s lawyers; therefore, it did not “confirm” inappropriate behavior.

Suggested rewording: “In response to the recent lawsuit involving alleged inappropriate behavior on the part of two UMKC faculty members....”

CRITERION TWO

1. Evidence that Core Components are met

Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3: Three references to a 2010-2015 Strategic Plan.

Correction: The current Strategic Plan covers the period 2010-2020.

<http://www.umkc.edu/provost/strategic-plan.asp>

Paragraph 3: “As stated in UMKC’s 2008 Urban Mission document (produced by the Department of Architecture, (e.g., the 2008 Urban Mission, Urban Planning and Design), UMKC is the urban campus of the University of Missouri System with a correlating commitment to developing solutions to 21st century problems.”

Response: This comment is taken from the October 2008 Mission Statement of the Urban Mission/Community Engagement Subcommittee of Provost Hackett's Strategic Planning Committee. This subcommittee authored the report dated February 2009. The Department of Architecture, Urban Planning and Design (the correct name for this academic department within the College of Arts & Sciences) did not produce the Urban Mission report. The Urban Mission/Community Engagement Subcommittee was composed of faculty and staff members from many university departments (including Dr. Joy Swallow, Chair of the Department of Architecture, Urban Planning & Design), as well as an alumnus of the university and a member of the Board of Trustees.

<http://web2.umkc.edu/StrategicPlanning/SubCommittee/UrbanVision/>

http://www.umkc.edu/accreditation/docs/criterion2/Strategic_Planning_Committee_Urban_Community_Subcomm_Mission_Statement_200810.pdf

http://www.umkc.edu/accreditation/docs/criterion2/Strategic_Planning_Committee_Urban_Community_Subcomm_Report_20090219.pdf

Paragraph 7: "In addition, the university is starting programs like PACE to increase the enrollment of nontraditional learners and has developed a "metro rate" to encourage students from outside the central Kansas City area to attend UMKC.

Response: The Program for Adult Education (PACE) began in the Fall of 1981. In addition, the "metro rate" covers students from four neighboring Kansas counties.

CRITERION THREE

1. Evidence that Core Components are met

Paragraph 1: "The University of Missouri System Board requires all academic programs and centers have evaluations every five years. The Program Evaluation Committee is charged with this responsibility by the Provost. The process varies across the university. The Graduate School Council does not participate in the process and professionals' schools have their own approach. A primary emphasis is recruitment/retention and program completion for individual programs. Assessment of student learning is not linked with program evaluation."

Response: This statement is incorrect. Every academic unit and academic program (graduate program, undergraduate program, and accredited programs) participates in the program review process, with timeframes and requirements adjusted for externally accredited program review cycles. Assessment of student learning is linked with program evaluation, as stated in the formal guidelines; however, academic units have not adhered to this aspect of the review. This aspect of the program review process is being analyzed and revised to strengthen this aspect and to require inclusion of the academic program assessment plan. We are also developing enhanced support mechanisms for academic units to fulfill this aspect of the review.

Paragraph 2: "Many opportunities to explore diversity connections are abundant on campus (for example, the Social Justice Book and Lecture Series of Rosa Parks Activism lecture) which helps UMKC to realize its mission."

Response: The Social Justice Lecture & Book Program, and the Rosa Parks Lecture on Social Justice & Activism are two separate initiatives of the Office of Diversity, Access & Equity.

Paragraph 4: “One university award, Curators’ Teaching Professorship, has been recently added. Although, it is secondary to the Curators’ Professorships which recognize “outstanding scholars with established reputations,” the Curators’ awards reflect competition beginning at UMKC and concluding with university of Missouri System Curators.”

Response: The Curators’ Teaching Professors rewards merit, and is not the result of competition with others. Rather than a competition, it is founded on a nomination process beginning at UMKC and concluding with the University of Missouri System Curators’ endorsement. Moreover, the award was not recently added (the first award was granted in 1998, with the Curators’ Professorship having been awarded since 1978), nor is it secondary to the Curators’ Professorships. Originally, there was such an award, the “Distinguished Teaching Professorship” that was secondary to Curators’ Professorships. It was subsequently revised to become a “Curators’ Teaching Professorship” to give additional emphasis to teaching, and to make it a full-fledged “Curators’ Professorship.” Thus, it reflects an increased emphasis upon the value of teaching, and an award for those deemed to be truly outstanding teachers.

<http://www.umkc.edu/provost/policies-procedures-forms/curators-professorships.pdf>

Paragraph 6: “It is noted that the School of Biological Sciences reviews its faculty on an annual basis and shares these reviews with the Dean, but it is not clear if this is an atypical practice.”

Response: The practice of the School of Biological Sciences, as noted in the Self Study, was meant to be an example of the type of policy utilized by the College and Schools of the University with respect to faculty review.

The policy of the University of Missouri is that all faculty members undergo annual reviews. The performance of all non-regular and untenured regular faculty members is to be reviewed annually by the appropriate unit supervisor (e.g., department chair, dean, director, etc.).

The tenured faculty of each department or unit will develop and publish minimum standards for overall satisfactory performance. Every tenured faculty member, including those with part-time administrative positions, will submit a signed annual report describing her/his activities in research, teaching and service. The annual report will be reviewed by the chair. In this document the term chair will be used to mean the appropriate unit director (e.g., chair, unit administrator, area coordinator, etc.) or evaluation committee of the unit following normal unit practices. Chairs will be reviewed annually by the dean, or on campuses with no schools or colleges, the Provost according to the standards described in Section B.1.a. of the Faculty Bylaws and Tenure Regulations of the Collected Rules and Regulations of the University of Missouri System Procedures for Review of Faculty Performance:

<http://umsystem.edu/ums/departments/gc/rules/bylaws/310/015.shtml>

In addition, Chancellor’s Memorandum #35 (Policies and Procedures for Promotion and/or Continuous Appointment at the University of Missouri – Kansas City) requires the annual review of all faculty; there is also post-tenure review every five years after receipt of tenure.

http://www.umkc.edu/accreditation/docs/compliance/P&T_Chancellors_Memo_35_20071221.pdf

<http://www.umkc.edu/provost/academic-affairs-support/promotion-and-tenure/promotion-and-tenure.asp>

3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up

Paragraph 1: "Outcomes for the Dental Hygiene degree program could not be found...."

Response: The Student Learning Outcomes for the Bachelor of Science in Dental Hygiene were included in the electronic Resource Room, as well as through the online undergraduate catalog:

http://web2.umkc.edu/catalog/Bachelor_of_Science_in_Dental_Hygiene.html

CRITERION FOUR

1. Evidence that Core Components are met

Paragraph 5: "Over the past 6 years, total research activity (measured in dollars) increased to FY2005 with a sharp decrease in FY2006 and subsequent increase to FY2003 levels in FY2006."

Response: This statement appears to indicate that total research activity both decreased and increased in FY2006. Information from both the Budget Office and Office of Research Services indicates the following: Revenue from grants and contracts did increase to \$46 million in FY2005, followed by a sharp decrease in FY2006. That part of the paragraph is correct. However, even in FY2006 the revenue was higher than in FY2003. Revenue has been increasing since FY2006, although we are still not at the FY2005 level.

Paragraph 10: "The development of programs that prepare students to work in a global society is exemplified by the College of Law's Summer Study Abroad programs to Ireland and China. These programs afford students the opportunity to experience another culture while living and learning abroad. Similar programs appear to be lacking at the undergraduate level. Steps should be taken to develop measurable curricular opportunities in all undergraduate schools and in student organizations."

Response: UMKC maintains an office of International Academic Programs (IAP) that reports to the Office of the Provost. IAP oversees all study abroad on campus and encourages undergraduates in every field to participate through study abroad fairs, regular information sessions, and visits to freshman "College 101" courses.

<http://web2.umkc.edu/international/>

Over the past five years, UMKC has sent over 1,400 students on study abroad programs. While professional and graduate students tend to go on programs at a higher rate than do undergraduates, undergraduates have accounted for nearly 38% of all students studying abroad. In addition, there is a wide variety of options for undergraduate students. In the past five years, academic departments which regularly take undergraduates abroad (from across all disciplines) include:

Dept. of Foreign Languages: Mexico, Spain, Argentina, France, Germany and Austria (and currently developing new opportunities in other French-speaking countries)

Dept. of English/Classics: Greece, Italy, South Africa

History/Honors: Sweden

School of Nursing: Honduras

School of Pharmacy: Ecuador

School of Dentistry: Guatemala

Bloch School/Business: China, Germany, England, Vietnam, France, Mexico

Conservatory of Music: Multi-Country Europe

College of Arts & Sciences: Administers the Missouri-London Program, which includes sending a faculty member every fall semester.

<http://web2.umkc.edu/international/FacStaffIAB/FacGuidebooksDocuments/Fac%20Guidebook%202009.pdf>

Many other options, for undergraduates in particular (not UMKC faculty led), include study through third-party providers such as International Studies Abroad (ISA), the Institute for Study Abroad – Butler University (IFSA-Butler), and direct enrollment at exchange partner schools for a semester or an academic year. The IFSA Foundation, which is associated with IFSA-Butler, funded a 3-year UMKC-proposed grant in December 2006 which provided \$75,000 in scholarships, although funding continues to be difficult for students. We have also awarded: (1) Eddie Jacobson, (1) Hy Vile, and (2) Sherman & Irene Dreisenzsun scholarships of \$2,500 each, funded by the Harry S. Truman Good Neighbor Award Foundation; in the past UMKC has matched those awards. All of the scholarships listed above are awarded to undergraduates who are studying abroad for a semester or longer.

A comprehensive list of study abroad opportunities is available on UMKC's IAP website:

<http://web2.umkc.edu/international/StudyAbroad/Programs.aspx>

In addition, since 1986 the University of Missouri South African Exchange Program (UMSAEP) has sponsored an exchange program with the University of the Western Cape (UWC) in Bellville (Cape Town), South Africa. The formal agreement signed in June 1986 was the first ever between a U.S. university and a historically black South African university. In addition to the faculty exchanges, in the past three years UMKC has sent at least one or two students each year to UWC.

<http://www.umsystem.edu/ums/departments/aa/southafrica/>

Advancement Section

I. OVERALL OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

Paragraph 1: "The University of Missouri-Kansas City has a proud history, depicting how the amalgamation of existing professional institutions within the Liberal Arts schools and the development of specifically designed units can combine into a symbiotic institution whose whole is greater than the sum of the units."

Response: This statement seems to place the professional schools within the College of Arts & Sciences (which is the only "Liberal Arts school" on campus). This is inaccurate. The existing "professional institutions" (the Schools of Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy and Law) in addition to the Schools of

Education, Biological Sciences, Computing & Engineering, and the Conservatory of Music & Dance, are independent academic units that possess the same hierarchical status as the College of Arts & Sciences.

<http://www.umkc.edu/academics/>

II. CONSULTATIONS OF THE TEAM

Diversity:

Paragraph 3: “There is not yet an office specifically charged with retention.”

Response: While there is no “Office of Retention” at UMKC, the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management and the Provost are responsible for issues of student retention.

Also in Paragraph 3: “While the strategic plan indicates “Embracing Diversity” as Goal 5 of 6 goals, the notes from the campus climate subcommittee suggest three meetings that do not focus heavily on substance.”

Response: It may appear that the minutes of the four meetings of the Diversity/Campus Climate subcommittee did not focus strongly enough on substance. However, the final report produced by the subcommittee details numerous, specific steps that will be implemented in order to improve diversity and the racial climate on campus.

http://www.umkc.edu/accreditation/docs/criterion2/Strategic_Planning_Committee_Diversity_Subcom Report_20090302.pdf

Enrollment Management:

“What is not clear is how the university is actively using these findings to recommend and make changes to address these concerns. The data seem to potentially support that there is another student audience the university can attract – those who don’t have time for traditional daytime education – by expanding distance education opportunities.”

Response: Mel Tyler, Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, felt that there were some critical details missing from this section of the HLC Advancement report, and offered the following clarifying information:

The Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management defines enrollment management as “an integrated systems approach that focuses on student enrollments from the time of their initial inquiry through graduation and post-graduation” (Hossler, 1986). Using this philosophy, the Division takes the lead on engaging with community organizations and partnering with the academic units at UMKC in order to implement and enhance the University’s Strategic Enrollment Management Plan. The plan includes recruitment and retention strategies designed to reach our enrollment goals that were projected by the academic units based on their capacity for growth and retention. As part of our Division’s role, we also assist in conducting studies of our student populations to determine satisfaction and ways to improve. These studies include the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI), exit surveys of students who decide to drop out for a

semester, and senior surveys of graduating students. These surveys give a snapshot of the student population at that time, but also give a good indication of the university's strengths or areas needing improvement and further study. For example, students who took the SSI in Spring 2008 indicated a performance gap in their level of importance and the level of satisfaction with having a "run-around" when seeking information (see full report at http://irapweb.umkc.edu/ir/files/pdf/Noel-Levitz%202007%202008%20Insides%2011_18_08%20FINAL.pdf).

The UMKC Strategic Plan has a specific objective to address this gap by developing a centralized student success center for a one-stop approach to meeting students' needs. An analysis of the Exit Surveys shows that 25% of students who completely withdrew from the Spring 2008 semester indicated conflict between their job and their studies as the main reason for withdrawal. Other reasons include personal problems, physical problems, financial problems, and home responsibilities as reasons for leaving the university. Of the students who withdrew, 72.4% indicate they plan to return. To help support new students and connect them to resources, such as social workers, counselors, tutors, and other services, UMKC has piloted an Early Alert Program to identify students who may need extra assistance transitioning to UMKC. Additionally, UMKC's Student Life Office has made a commitment to supporting our commuter students by providing special events just for them (see more at <http://www.umkc.edu/stulife/commuter-student.asp>).

However, we recognize that more students are interested in taking classes online for the convenience, and the University of Missouri System eLearning Task Force is exploring ways to offer more online learning opportunities by expanding courses and degree programs online. One UMKC-specific example is the College of Arts & Sciences partnering with the School of Nursing to offer required general education courses online. In this way, the School of Nursing can offer the entire RN-to-BSN degree program online.

http://www.umkc.edu/accreditation/docs/studentaffairs/Enrollment_Mgmt_Plan_2007-2011.pdf

Comments from the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, Dr. Cynthia Pemberton, regarding the issues raised regarding the university's assessment process:

A critical omission in the report is the failure to recognize our participation and work as part of the HLC Academy for the Assessment of Student Learning which includes the *Student Learning Portfolio* work of the History Department, focused on the use of e-portfolio methods to assess program level learning outcomes, and the continuous multiple sessions focused on student learning outcome assessment sponsored by FaCET (Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching). The University of Missouri - Kansas City is committed to excellent academic programs and to providing learning experiences that support students as they strive to master targeted student learning outcomes. The University has demonstrated its commitment through participation in the Higher Learning Commission Academy for the Assessment of Student Learning for AY2007-2008 through AY2010-2011.

In response to the portion of the Higher Learning Commission's site visit report regarding student learning assessment, we are developing plans to address the issues raised in the draft site visit report, to include:

1. The development of assessment plans for each academic program, to be reviewed and approved by the University Assessment Committee;

2. Review of the program evaluation process to strengthen the connection between student learning assessment and the review and revision of academic programs;
3. Revision of the assessment web site to focus information to assist faculty in the development of academic program assessment plans;
4. Revision of the University Assessment Committee charge to include systematic review and approval of academic program assessment plans;
5. Completion of the existing university assessment plan and development of a “new” next phase university assessment plan;
6. Review and revision of the university general education program requirements and the development of an associated assessment plan;
7. A review of current curriculum/course approval processes to include the identification of student learning outcomes;
8. Review of faculty development activities to support the planned assessment initiatives.