

Concerns about Implementation Plans for Gen Ed 2.0
May 15, 2018

To: UMKC Faculty Senate

From: UMKC School of Computing and Engineering Faculty Leadership and Advisors

In Spring 2017, the General Education 2.0 Academic Program was distributed for comments to the UMKC faculty, endorsed by the Faculty Senate, and approved by the Provost. On August 15, 2017, the General Education 2.0 Implementation Team submitted their recommendations in a 31-page report plus appendices. On page 2 of that report, a short but potentially profound statement is made that, "Courses in the GE2.0 program do not count for major degree requirements, with the exception of the Math Pathways course."

As faculty leadership and advisors from all degree programs in the School of Computing and Engineering, we are very supportive of Gen Ed 2.0. We are excited by its opportunities to strengthen UMKC's connection to the Kansas City community and to provide an outstanding experience for all students. However, we believe such a statement, sometimes called a "no double-dipping policy", creates unnecessarily high additional costs to the students in our degree programs.

According to a report from the UMKC Advising Leadership Team, this policy will result in 6 to 15 additional credit hours added to degree programs in the schools of Education, Dentistry, Nursing, Management, and the Conservatory. Such increases would surely leave UMKC's students at a grave disadvantage. We are not sure faculty in those units are even aware of this predicament. In the School of Computing and Engineering, all of our degrees would then require at least 6 credit hours more than any of our five closest competitors. In an environment where students are dissatisfied with the cost of education, asking them to take Gen Ed courses that don't also satisfy degree requirements is likely to have a serious impact on our enrollment.

Our concerns, along with possible alternative solutions and suggestions for inclusion of faculty and our community college partners, were originally communicated in a letter to Provost and Interim Chancellor Bichelmeyer on September 1, 2017. On April 18, 2018, she announced that Gen Ed 2.0 will be implemented in Fall 2019. Prior to this, it was announced during the April 13, 2018 meeting of UMKC's Undergraduate Curriculum Committee that Gen Ed 2.0 would not allow "double-dipping".

As faculty groups begin development of Critical Thinking courses over the summer, we ask for creative solutions throughout the campus that enable so-called "double-dipping" to the tremendous benefit of our students. We can pursue creativity and partnerships to address the Gen Ed 2.0 essential questions learning outcomes while also meeting curricular and accreditation requirements for physics, ethics, and community engagement. We are experts at accomplishing multiple sets of learning outcomes at the same time. We ask the Faculty Senate to be intimately involved in the process and carefully review the results.