Memorandum

To: All UMKC Faculty Members

From: The General Education Oversight Committee

Re: Campus-Wide Discussion of General Education Requirements

Date: November 30, 2010

This fall, Provost Hackett commissioned a General Education Oversight Committee and charged it with leading a university-wide discussion of general education at UMKC. The committee’s goal is to engage the UMKC community in a collaborative review and revision of our general education requirements. For this project to be successful, all faculty must be aware of, and given ample opportunity to participate in, the process. There are several issues motivating the need for general education reform.

Placing Student Success First

Some units have not revised their general education program in many years. Accordingly, there are concerns that the current general education requirements may not best meet the needs of our students. One of our goals is to ensure the relevance of our general education program.

There has never been a campus wide discussion of general education, nor a widely agreed upon set of general education requirements. The lack of a coordinated general education program occasionally results in students being penalized when they transfer from one academic unit to the other, as some courses may not readily transfer. This creates a challenge for both retention and graduation rates. One goal of this process is to help streamline the general education program to ensure that students are receiving the skills they need to be successful without creating unnecessary, and often unintentional, obstacles toward graduation.

Accreditation Requirements

The Higher Learning Commission, UMKC’s regional accrediting body, requires that UMKC have a clear set of learning outcomes and an assessment plan for its general education program. This is currently not in place. The HLC will be revisiting UMKC in 2013 to evaluate our progress in this regard. While we do not want to rush through a process of general education reform, we are also constrained by HLC expectations and must have made substantial progress toward meeting its requirements before our next site visit.

Considerable efforts have already been underway toward general education reform. A task force was created in the fall of 2009 to review the existing general education program and to explore best practices at our peer institutions. In addition, a working group attended a general education conference sponsored by the American Association of Colleges and Universities last summer to learn from other institutions and to make recommendations about how to move forward with general education reform.
at UMKC. The efforts of both groups are open to everyone and may be found on the provost’s website at the following address: http://www.umkc.edu/provost/committees/general-education-advisory-task-force/default.asp

Current Effort

The first step in our campus-wide conversation is to establish the learning outcomes that will serve as the foundation for our general education program. Attached you will find a draft of possible learning outcomes for the general education program at UMKC. These learning outcomes are based on an examination of our current general education programs, the Missouri Coordinating Board for Higher Education’s General Education Matrix, the American Association of Colleges and Universities’ LEAP (Liberal Education America’s Promise) report, as well as learning outcomes identified by various programs across the country. This is not a finalized list, but rather a starting point for discussion. Several are learning outcomes that have been widely accepted by institutions across the country. In addition, there are some learning outcomes that would be unique to UMKC, emphasizing our mission as an urban institution focusing on the life and health sciences as well as the visual and performing arts.

The GEOC wants every faculty member to have an opportunity to review and offer comments regarding UMKC’s general education student learning outcomes. As you review these draft learning outcomes please think of the knowledge, skills and attitudes you think every undergraduate student should have upon graduating from UMKC.

We must also be able to state the learning outcomes in a manner that will allow them to be measured. Each general education student learning outcome must have specific measurable competencies associated with them and we must have an assessment plan for each. Please consider this as you submit your thoughts and recommendations about our general education learning outcomes.

Once we receive feedback, we will modify the general education student learning outcomes and prepare a second draft for public discussion in January. Faculty, students, and other relevant stakeholders will have an opportunity to comment and make recommendations regarding our general education student learning outcomes. We will then work with each unit toward ratification of these learning outcomes.

To ensure that we have time to incorporate faculty input prior to the meetings in January, we would like to have your written comments submitted by December 17th. You may review the draft learning outcomes and submit comments at the following site: www.surveymonkey.com/s/geoc You may also email general comments to geoc@umkc.edu.

If you have questions please contact the GEOC representative from your academic unit. A complete list of committee members can be found on the GEOC website at the following address: http://info.umkc.edu/genedoversight/roster/

Sincerely,

The General Education Oversight Committee
UMKC General Education Learning Outcomes
And Assessment Criteria

DRAFT DOCUMENT

Core Skills: Students will develop the skill sets necessary to be effective life-long learners and intellectual leaders in their chosen fields. These will include enhancing their skills and techniques in written, oral and visual communication, the effective use of informational systems, and their capacity for analytical/logical problem solving.

1. Written Communication

Students will be able to write in a variety of formats, to use proper grammatical and stylistic structure, to engage a variety of audiences, and to effectively document sources.

Competencies

- Students write papers using appropriate style and grammar
- Students are able to demonstrate effective use of electronic informational systems, library and other resources.
- Students understand academic integrity and demonstrate the ability to properly cite sources
- Students will develop competency with information technology

2. Oral Communication

Students will develop their ability for effective oral expression. They will be able to present their ideas in a variety of formats and for a variety of audiences.

Competencies

- Students will demonstrate capacity for effective oral presentation
- Student will demonstrate effective use of audio/video aids to assist in content delivery
3. **Quantitative, Mathematical and Logical Reasoning**

Student will be able to apply principles of math, statistics, or formal logic to solve problems and draw logical inferences. They should develop a level of quantitative literacy that will enable them to make decisions and solve problems in relevant contexts.

**Competencies**

- Student can solve problems by application of analytical tools and rules
- Student shows ability to apply general concepts to specific cases
- Students demonstrate ability to draw logical inferences

**Foundational Knowledge and Methods:** Students will learn to discover the complex world around them through different ways of knowing and methods of inquiry. Students will learn the unique contributions of the three major branches of inquiry and what they reveal to us about the natural world and the peoples and cultures that inhabit that world.

1. **Scientific Reason and Discovery**

Students will understand basic methods and principles of scientific discovery and how they are used to solve problems in the physical world. Students should understand how scientific discovery changes theoretical views of the world, informs our imaginations and shapes human history. To align with UMKC’s mission, students will understand the application of scientific discovery in the life and health sciences.

**Competencies**

- Students will show proficiency with the methods of scientific inquiry
- Students can follow directions and duplicate lab experiments
- Students draw logical conclusions from data provided

2. **Social and Behavioral Sciences**

   Students will develop familiarity with the content, methods and theories in the social and behavioral sciences in order to understand the complexities of the cultural and social world, past and present, and come to an informed sense of self and others.

   **Competencies**
   
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3. **Humanities**

   Students will learn to consider problems of the human condition by exploring the ways that creative and linguistic expression informs cultural values in personal, local, national and global contexts.

   **Competencies**
   
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**Culture, Values and Diversity** Through study and engagement, students will explore the broad dimensions of human culture and values. Special emphasis is placed on UMKC’s mission as an urban institution with a focus on the visual and performing arts.

   1. **Visual and Performing Arts**

      Students will cultivate receptivity for capacity of the visual and performing arts to represent knowledge and beliefs and to achieve a unique mode of interpersonal communication.

      **Competencies**
      
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2. **Urban Awareness and Engagement**

Students will appreciate the opportunities and challenges of an urban environment. They will contribute to the betterment of that environment through service learning and other structured activities.

**Competencies**

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3. **Values**

Student will be able to apply principles of value, stewardship, moral reasoning and civic duty to a wide range of settings.

**Competencies**

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4. **Cultural and Diversity Awareness**

Students will demonstrate their awareness that cultural diversity fundamentally affects the human condition, and that local and global citizenship demands attentiveness to both culture and diversity.

**Competencies**

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