General Education Course and Course Approval Guidelines

I. Specific Recommendations for the General Education Curriculum Committee:

1) Rotate membership for terms such that only 1/3 of members rotate off at any given time.
2) Set up a Discourse Subcommittee with a Chair to oversee Discourse Courses as proposed in Section IV.
3) Set up an Anchor and Platform subcommittee with Chair to review Anchor and Platform courses and assessment on a three year, rotating basis (such that only 1/3 of classes at a time are being reviewed).
4) Approve University General Education Assessment Plan (attached), and utilize the Approval forms within (appendices C and D) for approving Anchor and Platform Courses.
5) Review and approve the Discourse Sequence as developed by the Discourse Subcommittee.

II. All Courses- Certain requirements are expected of all courses:

1) Courses must be approved by their home unit(s) prior to being evaluated as General Education courses by the General Education Curriculum Committee. As such each course should have a syllabus that meets current University and unit level guidelines.
2) Courses with instructors from multiple units or departments should be cross-listed, or another clear arrangement between units should be worked out and communicated when the course comes up for approval for General Education.
3) Course syllabi must have clear expectations laid out for students regarding grading and expected outcomes.
4) Approved courses must have an assessment plan, and the University Provost’s office will work with instructors and departments to help develop assessment plans.
5) Courses will be reviewed by the General Education Curriculum Committee to ensure that they are being taught, that their assessment plans are being fulfilled, and that their syllabi continue to reflect the material originally approved for the course.

III. Anchor Courses: These courses are meant to teach interdisciplinary thinking and are related to specific content areas. They are tied to Discourse courses to allow for broad cohorting of students.

1) Must be interdisciplinary, meaning they cut across different recognized academic disciplines.
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2) Must be taught by instructors from different departments, programs, or units who team to teach the content. Instructors should have contact with one another in the classroom, in front of the students, as part of the course plan. It is expected that instructors will overlap a significant portion of the time in class, and that this will be detailed in their General Education Curriculum Committee approval documents.

3) Courses should highlight different modes of thinking, exemplified for example by the team of instructors leading conversations to highlight their different disciplines.

4) Paired with co-requisite Discourse I (Values and Reasoning), II (Culture and Diversity), or III (Civic and Community Engagement) courses.

5) We expect that the courses align with Discourse content at the level of the paired Discourse course (for the purpose of writing, readings, comprehension, oral comm., and other Discourse objectives.)

6) Must identify an area/topic from among Values and Reasoning, Culture and Diversity, or Civic and Community Engagement.

7) Must assess the related learning outcome(s).

8) Anchor courses could be higher enrollment courses.

9) Students must take Anchor 3; they cannot waive it.

10) The instructor(s) makes the argument for which anchor area the course fits; this needs to be approved by the General Education Curriculum Committee.

11) These are generally 3 credit hour courses.

**IV. Discourse Courses:** These courses replace the traditional two courses of English and one of Communications, and allow for the teaching of orality and literacy within the same course.

1) There will be a mechanism for allowing and fostering collaboration between the Discourse and Anchor courses in terms of course content and assignments. We anticipate that this will be aided in part by FACET.

2) Discourse courses will teach orality and literacy in ways that reinforce the content of the anchor courses.

3) These courses will typically have smaller enrollments than their anchor courses.

4) Communication and information literacy will be a component of the discourse courses. Faculty from the Library will participate in this outcome, and a Librarian will be available to assist in teaching information literacy. It is recommended that instructors take advantage of this asset and try to build this into their syllabus.

5) Enrollment in these courses is sequenced to meet learning outcomes and assessed goals: the sequence is Discourse I then Discourse II, then Discourse III.

6) These are three credit hour courses each.

7) For purposes of registration, students enroll in anchor courses through the linked discourse class. If a student has waived the associated discourse class, they still enroll in it as a non-credit class.
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8) The grading of anchor and discourse courses is independent; they are distinct courses.

9) Instructors for these courses will come from a pool of instructors approved by the Discourse committee. This Discourse committee may consist of the existing directors of Composition and Speech, as well as other members of the General Education Curriculum Committee or qualified parties brought on to staff the Discourse Committee. Assessment of these instructors will guide re-assignment of instructors going forward. Discourse III courses will be taught by full-time, regular, TT or NTT faculty. Instructors of these courses will meet regularly (Once every two weeks, for example) to discuss outcomes and maintain best practices.

10) Equivalencies for students transferring into the University who have external speech and composition courses will be determined by credit hours and courses; however, students will not be able to waive Discourse III because it is a UMKC General Education Requirement (along with Anchor 3). It is anticipated that students with 6-9 hours of external speech and composition courses will be able to waive Discourse I and Discourse II.

11) Subject to external University approval, equivalences for students transferring out of the University will be set as follows: Discourse I will be equivalent to a Composition I course, Discourse II will be equivalent to a Speech course, and Discourse III will be equivalent to an advanced Composition course. These equivalencies will be codified in the assessed content and syllabus.

Platform Courses: These are core courses that teach and enforce traditional disciplinary boundaries, allowing students to ground their interests in specific content areas.

1) Must be assessed for the associated platform area (student learning outcome); these are “Human Values and Ethical Reasoning”, “Scientific Reasoning and Quantitative Analysis”, and “Arts and Humanities”.

2) Course levels in the platform relate to expectations derived in anchor and discourse courses of the same level.

3) The instructor makes the argument for which platform area the course fits; this needs to be approved by the General Education Curriculum Committee.

4) Creativity in designing courses and meeting outcomes is encouraged. Platform courses may be traditional three hour lecture courses, or may be designed to fit specific criteria for the topic area. For example, a Foreign Language class may be a four or five credit hour course that meets more than one learning outcome. On the other hand, a one credit-hour curated “art in the community” experience might be narrowly focused to meet specific Arts and Humanities outcomes.

5) If a class has a co-requisite, the student will have to take the co-requisite course, and cannot waive it if their General education curriculum goes over 30 credit hours.