

Discussing and Prioritizing the Goals of General Education

Dear Colleagues,

As part of this year's Strategic Planning effort we seek broad input on the **Renewal of General Education Requirements**, a key recommendation of the task force report on Retention and Timely Graduation commissioned last year by Chancellor Gray-Little.

The recent surveys of KU faculty, staff, students, and alumni generated a list of General Education goals (see #II below). Based on these survey results, **critical thinking** and **written and oral communication** emerged as the most important by a wide margin. To hone this list further, we seek department and focus group input. Specifically, we need your help in prioritizing these goals to determine what outcomes are essential for our graduates to succeed in the 21st century.

Please discuss the following questions in a meeting of your unit (department, program, etc.). Your recommendations will be shared with the *Energizing the Educational Environment Work Group*, and your responses will serve as a foundation for re-envisioning general education at KU. Please encourage the members of your unit to think broadly about the goals that will benefit KU students of all majors and programs as they move beyond our campus and become the next generation of graduates.

Please select one of the following options to report the results of your discussion **before 3 December 2010**.

- After the discussion, each member of your unit may provide input directly at: <http://www2.ku.edu/~irsurvey/cgi-bin/rws5.pl?FORM=GoalsOfGenEd-DeptFocusGroupDiscussion-IndFac>. We will then analyze your unit results from these responses.
- You may use copies of this form to collect individual responses, tally and average them, and report your unit feedback at: <http://www2.ku.edu/~irsurvey/cgi-bin/rws5.pl?FORM=GoalsOfGenEd-DeptFocusGroupDiscussion-DeptChairsStatSummary>
- As the unit leader, you may gauge the overall response of your group through the discussion and then report the consensus at: <http://www2.ku.edu/~irsurvey/cgi-bin/rws5.pl?FORM=GoalsOfGenEd-DeptFocusGroupDiscussion-DeptChairsConsensus>

Thank you for contributing to this important initiative.

Chris Haufler and Ann Cudd

Co-Chairs, Energizing the Educational Environment Work Group

For each option in questions I and II, please use the following scale to rate your responses.

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Irrelevant Very low Somewhat Very Absolutely
 importance important important critical

- I. How important are the following purposes of a General Education Program? This list was compiled from a survey of peer institutions.

_____ Acquire skills to support the major.

_____ Introduce students to a broad range of fields and areas of study.

_____ Facilitate integration of knowledge across disciplines.

_____ Inspire students to be informed global citizens.

_____ Learn ethical behavior.

_____ Develop skills to succeed in and adapt to an ever-changing world/workplace.

_____ Generate opportunities for self-exploration and self-discovery.

_____ Provide a foundation for lifelong learning.

_____ Prepare students for leadership and teamwork.

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1-----2-----3-----4-----5
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II. How important are the following goals for General Education? This list was compiled from recently conducted surveys of KU faculty, staff, students, and alumni.

A. Knowledge

- _____ Background in humanities or literary traditions.
- _____ Historical perspectives.
- _____ Global perspectives.
- _____ Understanding a second language.
- _____ Principles and methods of the social and behavioral sciences.
- _____ The process of science and the fundamental scientific theories.
- _____ Appreciation of and engagement with the arts.

B. Values

- _____ Civil discourse and social responsibility.
- _____ Personal responsibility, ethical values, and integrity.
- _____ Appreciation of global issues (through study abroad, foreign language acquisition, and/or learning about ethnic diversity).
- _____ Respect for cultural diversity.
- _____ Environmental awareness and sensitivity.
- _____ Self-awareness, and self-confidence.
- _____ Ability for and commitment to lifelong learning.

C. Skills (*in addition to the previously identified **Critical Thinking** and **Written and Oral Communication***)

- _____ Reading for comprehension.
- _____ Mathematical, quantitative, logical, and technological fluency.
- _____ Ability to gather information and data to support a decision or conclusion.
- _____ Creative thinking and innovation.
- _____ Interdisciplinary thinking (applying cross disciplinary perspectives to problems).
- _____ Team building and leadership abilities.

D. Other

Please share any additional goals that are important to your unit.

Please discuss these questions and respond to them using the online survey fields provided:

1. In what ways can we develop better integration of General Education with the broad array of possible majors at KU?
2. How should our General Education requirements reflect the distinctive and special nature of the KU undergraduate experience?
3. What unique contributions can your unit make to General Education at KU?
4. What unique challenges does your unit have in contributing to General Education at KU?
5. Is there other feedback concerning General Education that you and/or your colleagues would like to share with the committee?