Energizing the Educational Environment: Strategic Planning Recommendations

Executive Summary

Positioning KU graduates for lifelong learning, leadership, and success in the 21st century requires major modification of the way that we currently motivate learning. Determining what we can accomplish depends on available resources; however, some of the most transformative changes require minor monetary investments, necessitating only a reorganization of curricula and different approaches to teaching. In our deliberations, the Energizing the Educational Environment workgroup considered a wide range of possible actions, and our recommendations touch nearly all stages of undergraduate student life at KU.

I) Broad recommendations: influencing students across their undergraduate careers.

1. **Renew General Education:** Building on current goals and invigorated by contributions from faculty, staff, students, and alumni, we have generated a revised set of concise Educational Goals, each elucidated by anticipated Learning Outcomes. These goals and outcomes will be shared with the KU community for input and revision, and will guide the development of a new University-wide general education curriculum. The new “KU Core Curriculum” will lay a solid foundation for all undergraduate students, regardless of major.

2. **21st Century Course Redesigns:** Following research on teaching and learning, faculty will be encouraged to update their courses to be more student-centered and problem-based. Opportunities will be developed to make greater use of technology to design hybrid courses that combine on-line information delivery with live discussion/lecture components.

II) Targeted recommendations: tied to particular points in student careers.

1. **Recruitment and pre-enrollment:** (1) Improve communication and intellectual engagement with admitted students by involving departments in contacting students; (2) Encourage use of on-line tutorials to identify broad areas of interest (e.g., humanities, social science), and to promote academic planning; and (3) Involve incoming students in a “Common Book” program.

2. **Orientation and enrollment:** (1) At orientation, connect incoming students with an advisor who will guide them through their first year; (2) Include more academic information in an expanded orientation program; (3) Promote “block enrollment” i.e., give students the option of joining cohorts enrolled in the same classes for academic support and intellectual exchange; (4) Revive the learning communities program.

3. **First Year:** (1) Provide continuity of advice in a “Pre-Major Advising Center;” (2) Institute and phase-in “First Year Seminars” as faculty-led, small-group discussions with interdisciplinary academic themes; (3) Extend “Common Book” discussions and programs into the first semester; (4) Encourage use of early-warning, intervention systems, especially in large lecture sections, and link struggling students with resources for improving performance.

4. **Second year and beyond:** (1) Transition all students to major advising no later than the end of their second year, ideally by the end of their first; (2) Clarify paths to professional schools and establish guaranteed thresholds of acceptance in them; (3) Engage all students in experiential learning.

5. **Fourth year:** (1) Encourage capstone experiences for all undergraduates as a defining feature of their final year; (2) Use capstone experiences to expand options for integration of knowledge, skills, and values.

III) Institutional changes: necessary to carry out these recommendations.

1. Centralize administration of undergraduate education to:
   a. Oversee a renewed KU Core Curriculum;
   b. Support and coordinate development and review of course redesigns;
   c. Coordinate student advising, build support systems for struggling students, and develop greater on-line resources for information on majors and other degree options;
   d. Organize, provide faculty incentives, and phase-in pre-enrollment and first year experiences;
   e. Integrate experiential learning with other components of undergraduate education.

2. Rename “University Advising Center” the “Pre-Major Advising Center” (or other appropriate name) to clarify its function in the different layers of undergraduate advising.

3. Consolidate all on-line advising and enrollment tools under the KYOU portal.

4. Redefine “interest codes” to represent clusters of related disciplines, and develop on-line tutorials to introduce these broad academic areas.

5. Establish a “Center for Experiential Learning” to coordinate service learning, engaged learning, certificate programs (GAP, REP, etc.), undergraduate research, and comparable opportunities.

6. Initiate a “Digital Design Studio” to support and encourage course redesigns.
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**Transforming Undergraduate Education at KU**

The KU Core Curriculum

**We expect students to:**
1. Build **core skills** of critical thinking and quantitative literacy
2. Strengthen written and oral **communication**
3. Develop a background of **knowledge** across fundamental areas of study

**Keys:** Link these educational goals to learning outcomes; ensure courses achieve the outcomes; review the courses for student learning

**Building first year experiences:**
- Common book
- First year seminars
- Learning communities
- Linked with advising

**Outcomes:** Retention, learning, intellectual engagement

**Keys:** Integrate with core curriculum, satisfy teaching obligation, institute incentivized proposal process

**Advising**
- Pre-Major Advising Center
- Enhance use of advising tool
- Develop on-line introductions to majors

**Enhancing experiential learning:** Learning communities, undergraduate research, community engagement, certificate programs, study abroad

**Keys:** Central offices (office of undergraduate research, experiential/engaged learning), faculty time/participation, meaningful links to educational experience

**Recruitment**

**Admission**

**Orientation**

**Year 1**

**Year 2**

**Year 3**

**Year 4**

**Graduation**

**STUDENT ACADEMIC TRAJECTORY, FROM RECRUIT TO ALUM**

**Attracting the best**
Engage departments in recruitment
Introduce broad area interest codes using online and print media

**Advising**
Advisors assigned based on broad area interest codes
Build academics into orientation

**Early Intervention**
**Outcomes:** Retain students, Discover learning problems
**Keys:** Enhanced technology; faculty and staff resources

**Advising**
Transition to majors advising
"Clear path" to professional schools

**Capstone experiences**
Integrating knowledge
Establishing clear completion goals
Improving time to degree

**Redesign courses to be:** Student-centered, problem-based, studio oriented, hybrid concept

**Outcomes:** Enhanced learning, engagement, retention, persistence, reaches ALL students

**Keys:** Incentives/rewards, space, technology, support/models (current redesign programs), substantial active learning required

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21st Century Course Redesigns
I) Renewing General Education

As originally conceived, “General Education” was intended to provide undergraduate students with non-specialized foundations of learning, and to equip them with the knowledge necessary to navigate their future. In the US, models of general education were developed first at Harvard and Columbia, and these models have continued to change, emphasizing different aspects of the fundamentals that students are expected to acquire. The two primary paths to gaining general education are the “distribution” approach and the “core” program. The distribution approach draws courses from departments that provide the background knowledge necessary to understand a particular discipline, and students are expected to “distribute” the courses they take across the various fields of study. The core program approach, on the other hand, is primarily “extra departmental.” Core curricula generally contain courses that are specific to the core and focus on interdisciplinary topics. Distribution approaches are much easier to institute and maintain as they do not require the development of new courses or new concepts of how to help students gain the general education that is central to their futures. Distribution models focus on basic knowledge acquisition whereas core program models are more skills-based and designed to generate capacities for learning.

With the advent of the internet and the easy availability of information, new “hybrid” models of general education evolved, and these models emphasized a range of learning outcomes rather than focusing primarily on basic knowledge. Hybrid models do not assume that acquiring skills will necessarily be included in the courses that are part of distribution models, and do not require inventing new general education-specific, interdisciplinary courses. Instead, in these models, “goals” of general education have been elaborated and “learning outcomes” from those goals have been explicitly stated. These goals and outcomes focus on a range of skills, knowledge, and values that all students, regardless of major or intended career, should attain. Courses that become part of the general education core are expected to demonstrate how they will help students attain the outcomes that follow from the goals, and how they will measure student learning. Whereas at many institutions general education was housed in (and a burden on) Colleges of Liberal Arts and Sciences, current hybrid models are university-wide. To meet the goals of the hybrid-model general education core, a range of courses from across disciplines can be selected by students to coordinate with their major and career objectives.

A) History

At KU, the last significant renovation of general education occurred in the mid 1980s, and was instituted in the fall of 1987. Housed exclusively in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS), general education followed primarily a “distribution” model, with writing and quantitative “skills” contained in English and math courses, a communications requirement, and incorporation of interdisciplinary “Western” and “Non-Western” Civilization components. Professional schools were free to determine what courses (if any) they required their majors to take in satisfying “general education” expectations.

Several attempts were made to renovate general education at KU. In 1999, a blue ribbon committee was asked to develop a set of General Education Goals. They submitted their preliminary report on 1 March 2000, and after a series of community presentations and discussions, those goals were finalized in December 2000. Each of the six goals were amplified in the report and suggested curricular and assessment methods were proposed. Unfortunately, at that time there was no formal integration of those goals with the requirements in the College or the professional schools. In 2004-2005, CLAS Dean Kim Wilcox launched a campus-wide consideration of general education, and centered the discussion on the six goals. In the process, contact was made across schools, and alignment of courses or activities with the goals was attempted. Unfortunately, when Dean Wilcox left KU, this process stalled and no meaningful outcome or change was obtained. In 2007, a College Task Force tried once again to reduce the general education requirements. This Task Force
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developed a series of relatively simple recommendations that were ultimately rejected by vote of a minority of the College faculty.

During the 2009-2010 academic year, the Chancellor charged a new University Task Force with considering aspects of Retention and Time to Graduation. One of the subgroups of that Task Force focused on the impact that current general education requirements had on the progress of our undergraduates. That subgroup noted:

• 18% of seniors who thought they were ready to graduate were forced to spend an additional semester completing overly complex general education requirements
• Transfer students took 12-15 more hours than other students because KU’s general education requirements were so highly structured that courses taken at other institutions were difficult to match with corresponding ones at KU
• At 72 hours of general education requirements, our BA degree is out of step with comparable institutions, where general education requires only 30-45 hours
• Using a “distribution” model of for general education and housing it in CLAS was inconsistent with national trends

As part of the current strategic planning process, we reconsidered the future of general education at KU, with the goal of renewing our general education program and its influence on the undergraduate degree programs at the University. Building from the many good foundational influences that have attempted to improve the general education goals and curricula, we have invited the participation of all faculty, staff, and students as we consider the future of our general education requirements.

B) Primary Recommendations:

Because past efforts to renew general education requirements for KU students have not succeeded, subgroup members were challenged to engage the full KU community in the process of developing recommendations. Thus, a series of surveys were launched to solicit guidance in revising the Goals of General Education. All faculty, staff, and students as well as alumni who graduated 5-10 years ago were asked to review the existing general education goals and to provide input on the development of revised goals. More than 700 individuals responded to the survey, indicated their top three general education goals (see Appendix I-A), and developed open-ended comments (see Appendix I-B). In addition, the chairs of all departments were asked to engage their faculty members in discussion of the goals (see Appendix I-C) and share the outcomes of these discussions with the subgroup, and focus group discussions were conducted with students and alumni. More than 40 departments provided feedback based on their collective discussions, and more than 500 individual faculty members were involved in providing feedback and indicating priorities for revising general education goals (see Appendix I-D).

The following themes were obtained from review of qualitative comments received through the surveys:

• The number of hours devoted to general education courses is too high.
• Disciplines are at pains to show their importance in general education.
• Critical thinking, problem solving, skepticism in the face of dogma, are all important outcomes of general education
• Enhancing capacity for articulating ideas through verbal and written communication is vital.
• Global awareness and experience are important.
• Understanding cultural diversity is a critical component of becoming contributory citizens.
• Taking language courses could contribute to a better understanding of global and cultural issues.
• Gaining experience in artistic expression and creativity should be part of general education.
• Capacity for interdisciplinary thinking should be a goal of general education.
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- Team-taught courses may be a good way to achieve this.
  - General education courses should be tied to goals and have specific objectives.
  - Quality of general education courses should be monitored closely.
  - General education should generate skills that will serve students in their major fields.
  - General education should focus on knowledge, skills, and attitudes essential to success in all majors, and as functioning citizens for the future.
  - Quantitative literacy is an essential skill.
  - Reading comprehension is an essential skill.
  - Build more awareness of engaged learning certificates programs (research, service, global).
  - Balanced representation across a broad range of disciplines should be a hallmark of general education.
  - General education requirements should build knowledge and skills but should not be discipline specific.

Reviewing comments from the student focus groups yielded the following themes:

- There is a lack of awareness of general education goals among students.
- Courses selected to fulfill requirements often seem arbitrary. It's not clear why some courses count and others do not.
- Messaging is a problem with General Education. "No one ever told me that gen eds. were important. I didn't get that they were important." --quote from focus group student. This observation came up in two focus groups.
- General Education courses are about memorization.
- Foreign language could be one way, but not the only way, to develop knowledge of another culture. "Two semesters of foreign language is enough." I would have preferred to take four semesters of intro language courses over 4 continuous semesters in a single language. I'm bad at learning a language. It would be better to have basic skills in four languages for travel, etc."
- If you change majors, you have little time to explore other areas of interest.
- Transfer credits don't count--makes graduating in 4 years a challenge.
- All students should have a small class in the freshman year.

As an additional guide in obtaining perspectives on the current state of general education nationally, subgroup members surveyed all AAU institutions (see Appendix I-E) and the following summary was obtained:

**Summary of General Education Requirements at AAU Public Institutions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Do the General Education Requirements apply uniformly to all students or are they housed in one College or School?</th>
<th>Summary Statistics</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23/35 indicated that General Education requirements are University-wide.</td>
<td>Those who have revised Gen Ed requirements in recent years have expected them to apply uniformly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How many hours are included in the Gen Ed requirements?</td>
<td>About 36, but variance is high (6-55)</td>
<td>Mode seems to be the upper 30s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>University of Pennsylvania and University of Texas, Austin appeared to be only schools with firmly integrated 1st year experience as part of Gen Ed.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Are there &quot;goals&quot; attached to the Gen Ed requirements?</td>
<td>21/35 had stated goals Most had courses tied to goals Most had some kind of University committee associated with determining how courses aligned to goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O If so, are those goals explicitly tied to a set of courses?</td>
<td>University of Pennsylvania and University of Texas, Austin appeared to be only schools with firmly integrated 1st year experience as part of Gen Ed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O Who decides what courses are associated with what goals? A University Committee?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Are first year seminars/courses part of General Education?</td>
<td>Most included and encouraged students to take first year seminars. Only 2 had first year seminars integrated with Gen Ed. Several had pre-semester experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O If so, what is the format of these? Topical? Free form?</td>
<td>University of Pennsylvania and University of Texas, Austin appeared to be only schools with firmly integrated 1st year experience as part of Gen Ed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O Who teaches them?</td>
<td>University of Pennsylvania and University of Texas, Austin appeared to be only schools with firmly integrated 1st year experience as part of Gen Ed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O Are they required or optional?</td>
<td>University of Pennsylvania and University of Texas, Austin appeared to be only schools with firmly integrated 1st year experience as part of Gen Ed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Is &quot;experiential&quot; or &quot;engaged&quot; learning (research, study abroad, service learning) a component of Gen Ed?</td>
<td>Although many had experiential opportunities, only Univ Wisconsin had them integrated into Gen Ed. Several had pre-semester experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. What plan for assessment of General Education is in place at &quot;AAU&quot; institutions? How do these institutions determine whether their students have attained General Education Goals?</td>
<td>Wisconsin was mentioned as having an enviable assessment plan, and Univ. Oregon as having just completed a thorough review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Any other insights or observations that may be interesting or potentially relevant to our discussion?</td>
<td>University of Nebraska, Indiana University, University of Oregon looked particularly interesting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After reviewing the survey results and considering trends in general education across AAU institutions, the subgroup agreed that KU should work toward revising the general education goals and ultimately establish a new general education curriculum. The subgroup recommended that the revised foundation for student learning be called “The KU Core Curriculum” and that it:

- Is University-wide,
- Links concise educational goals to more elaborated learning outcomes,
- Determines which courses will achieve the outcomes, and
- Reviews the courses for student learning.

### C) New Educational Goals and Learning Outcomes

During subgroup discussions, a broad range of general education goals were considered (see Appendix I-F). With the objective of generating a set of memorable goals that could be elaborated by more extensive “learning outcomes," subgroup members synthesized this long list into six concise statements that captured the essence of the goals and expectations that were obtained through surveying the KU community. The six proposed goals of a new KU Core Curriculum are:

*Through attaining the following goals of the KU Core Curriculum, we expect students to:*

1. Build core skills of critical thinking and quantitative literacy
2. Strengthen written and oral communication
3. Develop a background of knowledge across fundamental areas of study
4. Gain the ability to integrate knowledge and think creatively
5. Respect human diversity and expand cultural understanding and global awareness
6. Practice social responsibility and demonstrate ethical behavior

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Each of these goals is then detailed and elaborated by a set of learning outcomes:

**Goal 1:** Build core skills of critical thinking and quantitative literacy.

**Learning outcomes:** Upon completion of this goal, students should be able to:

- Explain and be able to assess the relationship among assumptions, methods, evidence, arguments, and theory in analyzing issues and ideas.
- Apply logical principles, rigorous standards of evidence, and careful reasoning to the investigation of claims and the solution of problems.
- Apply numerical skills to practical problems and use quantitative logic in addressing complex problems.
- Reason with numbers and other mathematical concepts, judge the veracity of statistical arguments, and recognize abuses of data.
- Understand the principles that underlie information systems.

**Goal 2:** Strengthen written and oral communication.

**Learning outcomes:** Upon completion of this goal, students should be able to:

- Communicate complex ideas effectively, in oral and written English, with an identified purpose and to a specific audience.
- Communicate proficiently in modes appropriate to a discipline or area of inquiry.
- Incorporate print and online sources faithfully and use applicable conventions of attribution and citation correctly.

**Goal 3:** Develop a background of knowledge across major areas of study.

**Learning outcomes:** Upon completion of this goal, students should be able to:

- Understand and be able to apply principles, methods, and concepts of mathematics and the physical and natural sciences.
- Understand and be able to use perspectives, concepts, and methods of the humanities to address human and social problems and issues.
- Explain and be able to assess the relationship among assumptions, method, evidence, arguments, and theory in social and historical analysis.
- Use knowledge, theories, methods, and historical perspectives appropriate to the social sciences and humanities to understand and evaluate human behavior.
- Understand and apply methods appropriate to the arts to understand their context and significance to other fields.

**Goal 4:** Gain the ability to integrate knowledge and think creatively.

**Learning outcomes:** Upon completion of this goal, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of related concepts across disciplines.
- Combine different perspectives relating to a single issue.
- Design creative protocols that generate new ways of thinking, consider a wide range of possibilities, and demonstrate innovation within a field or across fields.
- Engage actively and critically in the process of creative expression.
- Analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources and/or through interaction with others to generate new insights.

**Goal 5:** Respect human diversity and expand cultural understanding and global awareness.

**Learning outcomes:** Upon completion of this goal, students should be able to:

- Describe the concept of culture and understand the complexities of human commonalities and differences, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, and religion.
- Recognize personal and societal tendencies towards bias and stereotyping as well as the concept of privilege and appreciate how these can influence decision making.
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- Effectively use skills to negotiate cross-cultural situations or conflicts.
- Demonstrate understanding of concepts and methods that produce knowledge about our multi-ethnicity as well as international and global topics.
- Develop cultural self-awareness and understanding of our lives in a global context; appraise the nature of relationships between self and local, national, international, and global society.
- Engage in global activities and practice global responsibility; develop global citizenship.

**Goal 6:** Practice social responsibility and demonstrate ethical behavior.

**Learning outcomes:** Upon completion of this goal, students should be able to:
- Understand the motivation for involvement in society and the importance of ethics in addressing human activities.
- Explain ethical principles, civics, and stewardship, and their importance to society.
- Become an advocate for societal issues.
- Understand the relationship between social justice and diversity.

**D) Next steps:**
As indicated in the set of Strategic Action statements, the progress to date of the subgroup only starts the process of changing the way that KU establishes a new foundation for learning among its undergraduate students. In the coming months:

- The recommendations of the subgroup will be shared with critical leaders (Strategic Planning Steering Committee, Faculty Senate, Deans, Chairs)
- The KU community (faculty, staff, and students) will be engaged and surveyed for input and comment through Town Hall meetings and other outreach mechanisms.
- On April 26th, the University Leadership Council will visit KU and offer a workshop on learner outcomes.
- June 4-8, a team from KU will participate in the AAC&U Institute on General Education in San Jose, CA.
- Working with relevant College and professional school curricular committees, a new KU Core Curriculum will be developed. The process to obtain this objective will include:
  - Determining the number of credit hours associated with each goal and/or learning outcome;
  - Developing a process for nominating and approving courses that meet goals and outcomes;
  - Proposing how the courses will be reviewed, and how the results of course review will be used to improve learning outcomes from the courses.
- Appropriate groups will be asked to approve and institute the new KU Core Curriculum as the foundation for undergraduate education.

**II) Advising and Intervention**
Effective advising is a key element in improving retention and achieving timely graduation. At KU advising has changed radically over the past 16 years from when it was handled almost exclusively by faculty as part of their teaching mission, to now being performed extensively by professional advisors, particularly early in an undergraduate’s career. Some of these advisors are employed in the University Advising Center under the direction of the Vice Provost for Student Success, while the rest are employed by the College and the professional schools. Faculty continue to advise students, to a greater or lesser degree depending on the size of the School or Department, particularly in major and career planning. While much of this advising is of high quality, there are structural problems with the coordination of advising, which results in redundant advising and more than occasional errors. Furthermore, advising does not play a consistent role in recruitment of new students; the advisors who make recruiting visits are not the first year advisors, and web resources used in recruiting students do not include academic advising messages. Students see one
set of advisors at New Student Orientation, after which students are often assigned a different advisor. Advisors do not get early warnings when students they advise are struggling, and they are not currently evaluated based on student outcomes. Most worryingly, though, no one unit takes responsibility for moving students from undeclared to declared major status. As a result students sometimes fall through the cracks, fail to declare a major in time to graduate in four, five, or even six years, and are uncertain about where to go for the advising they need either to make the shift to a major or, particularly in the College, after they have declared a major.

Based on these observations there are several overarching improvements that will enhance student advising and improve retention and timely graduation.

- Ensure that students move smoothly and deliberately across the various transitions in their university education, especially from undecided status to declared major status.
- Enhance the quality and consistency of student advising.
- Evaluate advising quality both through measures of student satisfaction and student milestone completion (for example, percentage of students enrolled/completed core English and mathematics requirements within the first 30 hours, percentage of students enrolling in year 2 during enrollment period; percentage of students remaining as “undeclared” at the completion of 30 hours and 60 hours; percentage of referrals to academic support services of students placed on academic probation). Once information is available on an annually basis, provide feedback to advising units and individual advisors.
- Match advisors to student needs. For example, students who have declared their majors are often confused by the advising structure at KU and as a result seek out advisors who are not trained specifically to meet their needs as more advanced students. We recommend changes in both procedures and institutional structure to address this concern.
- Use web-based technology in several targeted ways to improve retention and timely graduation. KU does not currently make efficient use of its web resources or readily available data for advising. However, we have a local model of excellent online advising that could be adapted in multiple ways to help achieve key recruitment and advising goals, and make KU a national model in the process.

A) System-wide improvements to undergraduate advising:

1) Change the Institutional Structure of KU Advising

At KU advising is divided between Student Success, which oversees the University Advising Center, and academic units in the College and each School, where major advising and graduation checks are performed. This division of advising between two different institutional cultures, that of Student Success and that of academic units, poses problems for both the institution and students. Students experience redundant and conflicting advising with KU’s current decentralized advising structure. A central unit can better coordinate and target advising to both improve student outcomes and realize savings.

*We recommend that KU create a central academic unit at the level of the Provost to coordinate undergraduate advising. We further recommend restructuring the University Advising Center to focus on undecided students, and move decided students promptly to College and School advisors, as discussed below.* In connection with this, we recommend changing the name of University Advising Center (UAC) to Pre-Major Advising Center (PMAC) or some other name that clarifies the responsibility of that center, to make it obvious to students that they are to seek advice from their major advisors once they have declared a major. Finally, PMAC should consider "triage" and "caseload" approaches, to streamline the advising process for students who can effectively use existing web-based advising and enrollment systems and do not wish or require advisor interference, focus efforts on the students who need attention from advisors, and hold advisors accountable for their students’ progress to major declaration.
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B) Computer Technology Improvements

We recommend that KU centralize online undergraduate Advising/Enrollment tools under the KYOU portal, and centralize undergraduate academic resources (undergraduate catalog, schedule of classes, advising resources) on the university website.

C) Targeting advising improvements to aid students at multiple stages in their trajectory from recruitment to graduation:

1) Recruitment to First Day of Classes

Many faculty and staff, including Associate Vice Provost for Recruitment and Enrollment Matt Melvin, observe that our current recruitment materials treat academic matters, including majors offered and college expectations, too briefly. This sends students a subtle message that attending KU is not primarily about academic education, timely graduation with a suitable major, and career development. A first way we can improve is by creating a series of short videos about majors in the College and Schools that can be streamed from our website. We would commission University Relations to work with departments and schools to give us their “best five minutes” that would display the exciting research and educational opportunities they offer undergraduates. These videos would have multiple purposes beginning with recruitment, but also constituting a “Virtual Majors Fair” that can be used to help students at any point, as well as the public, explore the majors offered at KU. Second, we propose that KU send students, immediately upon their payment of the enrollment deposit, an online module, modeled on the successful Psych 102 online course developed by Professor Paul Atchley. This module, which would be required for enrollment, would teach students basic planning skills and guide them through exercises to select among newly developed broad interest codes and begin to formulate plans for initial course work as well as an intended four year graduation.

Interest codes chosen by students as they apply for admission to KU are too specific for many students, and often confuse students who believe they have thereby declared a major. These codes have proven particularly difficult for advising purposes. We recommend that KU develop broad interest codes that span several closely related disciplines (e.g., “social science”, “humanities”, “natural science”) that would help guide students more purposefully to explore potential majors. These interest codes would then be used by advisors who will meet students during New Student Orientation to assist with enrollment, and continue on as their advisors in their first year or until they are admitted to a major or School, or make a major declaration (for those majors without admissions requirements). Using new broad interest codes, pre-major students should be assigned to advisors with training in those broad areas.

At present, ±8% of KU students leave before sophomore year despite being in good academic standing, and many of these state that the reason for not returning is that they have not connected to KU. Forming cohorts of first year students will help them feel part of an academic group. We recommend implementing block enrollment in key first year classes (e.g., English 101/102, Math 101/115, Chemistry 184) to construct cohorts, that is, groups of students who attend two or more of the same classes. This interaction will help them form study groups outside of class, and give them reasons for combining social and academic activities. Block enrollment will also assist enforcement of early and continuous enrollment in English and Math basic skills classes, which has been found to help with improving time to graduation rates.

KU can better take advantage of existing statistical data on its incoming students to efficiently personalize advising. We recommend that advisors make greater use of ACT data to advise and prepare students for college work.
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2) First year

The first year of a student’s experience at KU ideally establishes good college level study habits, grounds their education in foundational skills and knowledge building courses through general education, and promotes self-development of lifelong learning skills. A successful first year culminates in an achievable major choice.

Currently many KU students experience difficulties early in their first semester classes adjusting to college level expectations and need help recognizing and addressing weaknesses in skills and study habits. For example, 24% of students who begin in the College are placed on academic probation after their initial semester at KU. Many universities have adopted effective early warning and intervention systems that allow faculty, working through Blackboard, to automatically flag students who are struggling in their classes at an early point in the semester and relay this information to advisors, who can then triage the problems and recommend solutions. This approach is especially effective when used in large classes of first year students, in which students may get lost and withdraw or fail without timely intervention. **We recommend that KU adopt a computer automated early warning system and intervention procedures focusing on general education courses and first year students.**

Many KU students have not declared majors by the end of their sophomore year (after 60 hours of earned credits). Of the Fall 2008 cohort, 54.7% still have not declared a major or been admitted to a professional school as of this writing, which is their sixth semester at KU. The first year is the time to begin intensive exploration of majors. **We recommend that KU advising adopt procedures for ensuring students make timely, achievable major choices beginning in the first year and continuing through second year.** First we recommend that an advising component be built into high enrollment first year courses. This component would include a visit by advisors who specialize in pre-major advising, and demonstration and hands-on use of the online advising tool. Students who are comfortable with this approach could complete their enrollment advising in this group setting, while those needing or wanting additional, personalized advice could use online tools to set up appointments during this class time.

3) Second year through declared (admitted) major status

Too many undergraduates remain undecided after sixty hours of coursework, making timely graduation difficult or impossible. Focusing students on making achievable major choices early, disallowing unnecessary withdrawals, and taking a hard stand on undecided students past sophomore year status will improve graduation rates and time to degree. One of the obstacles to timely major declaration is the moving bar of admissions requirements for our professional schools. Recently the College changed the way that admissions requirements may be enforced by departments, disallowing quotas and competitive admissions, which creates an unpredictable, moving target for students, yet encouraging majors to set a clear level of achievement which guarantees admission, while permitting others to petition on a case-by-case basis. This allows departments to set their requirements in a predictable way for both the department and the student. **We recommend that Schools develop a similar “clear path” for KU students to progress to their majors.**

Students who do not achieve admissions to their first choice major need to develop a “Plan B”. **We recommend better “Plan B” advising for students.** Further, **we recommend that the College compel students who have completed seventy hours to either declare a major, declare that they will seek a BGS in Liberal Arts &Sciences degree, or be administratively moved to non-degree seeking status.**

Finally, KU, unlike many of its peers (e.g., University of North Carolina, University of Texas, Austin), currently has no limit on the number of withdrawals a student makes. **We recommend that KU adopt a limit on withdraws over their undergraduate career, allowing for petitions in exceptional cases.**
Energizing the Educational Environment: Strategic Planning Recommendations

4) Declared major status through graduation

Students who have successfully declared a major need appropriate advising for that major. The professional schools do an admirable job of progressing their students to graduation, but the College has considerable room for improvement. One problem is that students are not sure who to meet with for major advising: faculty in their major, a CLAS Student Academic Services advisor, or the pre-major advisor with whom they had previously worked. The result has been inconsistent, redundant, and sometimes erroneous advising. The model that works best for these students is the combination of a professional advisor for the major who advises on general education and major degree requirements combined with faculty advisors for guidance in focusing within the major and career planning. We recommend that more advisors be placed in majors or among clusters of smaller majors grouped by the new broad Interest Codes and cross trained in those specific majors’ requirements.

Students need to be made aware of the full range of academic activities available outside the classroom and of their career options and how they can best develop themselves to take advantage of them. Professor Paul Atchley has developed a model online course for Psychology majors which is now required for admission to the Psychology major. This online, one hour course advises students about the research, internship, and other experiential learning activities available to them, and then requires them to create a plan for incorporating one or more of these activities into their undergraduate career. It also advises them about the various specialties and career options available to Psychology majors, and assists them in planning their academic career to achieve their choice of outcomes. We recommend such online options be developed for all majors with more than 150 students.

III) Engaged Learning

Research on student learning and engagement shows that students learn best when they are active participants in their own educational experiences. “High impact” engaged learning practices have an established track record of increasing students’ intellectual engagement, achievement of core learning outcomes, and retention and timely graduation. These practices benefit all students, although they are especially valuable for historically underserved students and can essentially cancel out their higher risk of attrition.

High impact practices are underutilized and under-supported at KU, yet they could address many of the current challenges we face in undergraduate education. KU’s retention and timely graduation rates are significantly lower than those at our peer institutions, even those with comparable admissions criteria and average ACT/SAT scores. The Chancellor’s Task Force on Retention and Graduation in 2009-2010 recommended that KU explore a range of educational practices that intellectually engage students because these practices can improve retention and timely graduation while simultaneously increasing the quality of the education we provide. KU lags behind many institutions in the AAU in providing undergraduate students access to high-impact educational practices that ask them to actively participate in their own learning, and we are particularly weak in engaged learning practices aimed at first-year students. In the last decade, several teams of KU faculty and staff have designed and implemented educational initiatives to promote undergraduate student engagement and active and experiential learning (e.g., the Center for Service Learning, the undergraduate certificate programs, Learning Communities, the Honors Commons courses, and course redesign programs), but neither institutional support nor faculty and student utilization of these innovations has been widespread.

With the strategic planning process underway, we are now poised for transformational change in undergraduate education at KU. Twenty-first century technology, widespread availability of information, and many recent discoveries about effective, efficient teaching and learning provide us with an unprecedented number of innovations that promote active participation, engagement, and deep learning. KU has already developed strengths in some engaged learning practices. The recommendations outlined here involve systematic and widespread expansion and utilization of
Energizing the Educational Environment: Strategic Planning Recommendations

these opportunities to promote engaged and active learning experiences for all undergraduate students, both within courses and outside the classroom setting. These changes will transform the undergraduate experience for students and faculty, and will also facilitate recruitment of students looking for a rich, stimulating educational environment.

A) The First Year

Most AAU institutions have high-quality first-year experiences that prompt early and frequent student engagement in the intellectual life of the university and help them transition into the second year and beyond. We recommend that KU undertake three major first-year experience initiatives:

• develop first-year seminars (FYS),
• create cohort learning opportunities, and
• adopt a common book program.

The goal is to make it possible for all first-year students to participate in one or more first-year experience programs that will connect them to KU intellectually and emotionally and reduce the likelihood of attrition. One key component of most high-quality first-year experiences is the FYS. These small-enrollment courses can take many forms but those that emphasize the development of students’ intellectual and practical skills are the most effective in producing positive educational outcomes. Of all the high-impact practices, FYS are the most thoroughly investigated in the empirical literature, with clear, compelling links to improved student learning, persistence and timely graduation (See Appendix III-B).

First year students at KU have few opportunities for small course learning and connections with faculty members beyond English 101 and small-section language and math courses. As a result, many of our first year students take multiple large introductory courses that are taught in settings that create challenges for active participation and collaboration among students (e.g., large, tiered lecture halls with fixed seating). One exception is PRE 101, a 2-credit university orientation seminar. This course serves an important function in orienting students to university life and creating social bonds among students, and it has been effective in improving some areas of undergraduate student success. Yet only a small proportion of first-year students take PRE 101 and few if any sections are taught by tenured or tenure-track faculty. There are no incentives to encourage faculty members to offer intellectually engaging, discussion-based courses for first-year students. One way to fill this void is to develop 3-credit hour first-year seminars that are taught by faculty and organized around stimulating, interdisciplinary, and leading-edge content areas. In addition to facilitating student cohorts, these courses provide early engagement with the intellectual life of the university, promote deep learning and thinking skills, and create early connections to a faculty member. Moreover, reports from successful and long-standing FYS programs reveal that they are highly satisfying to the faculty who offer them.

The most successful and sustainable topical first-year seminar programs at large state universities are ones that:

• are a part of the instructor’s regular teaching responsibility,
• contribute to core curriculum credit for students,
• align with one or more of the core learning goals of the university, and
• emphasize collaborative, active, or experiential learning.

By partnering with a Center for Experiential Learning, these courses could also serve as a mechanism for channeling students into experiential learning tracks or emphases that will enhance their educational experiences beyond the first year. Faculty could also coordinate with academic advising units to build an advising and academic planning component into their first-year seminars. It will be essential to establish and publicize clear guidelines for these courses and a proposal process that is administered by a central academic unit. We recommend a gradual and iterative process of FYS development, with the goal of enrolling 50% of first year students in FYS within 5 years. We anticipate that faculty could be identified and incentivized through course
Energizing the Educational Environment: Strategic Planning Recommendations

releases or stipends to design and implement FYS pilots early in the first year of the development phase. Results of the pilot FYS should be analyzed and publicized to refine plans for further course development and implementation and to promote more widespread development of new FYS. Multiple campus units (e.g., CTE, Libraries, Writing Center, CLS, and technology units) should be engaged to create course design workshops and online tutorials to support FYS proposals and implementation.

We recommend that a FYS program be implemented as a reinvestment of faculty time rather than a supplemental activity. In concert with a plan for reduced general education requirements and a reorganization of the General Education (Core) curriculum. We recommend that FYS contribute to the Core Curriculum; as such, departments could develop FYS to replace some of their current general education offerings. The low “credit-hour production” of individual FYS as well as one-time course releases for faculty participating in course development/redesign programs (for FYS and other EEE initiatives) could be counterbalanced by at least three additional mechanisms:

• Analyses outlined in Appendix III-F reveal that the average KU undergraduate student graduates with more than 13 credit hours beyond what is required by the major. The EEE recommendations, particularly those for Advising and Intervention, will facilitate more timely transitions into the major, reduce time to graduation, and reduce numbers of students who earn D or F grades in or withdraw from undergraduate courses. Over the next five years these changes should translate into significant reductions in the number of courses students take to earn their degrees. Reduced overall demand for classes would support expansion of small section course offerings (e.g., FYS) and one-time course releases.

• Schools that implement the recently-approved 124-to 120 total credit hour reduction will be able to repurpose those credit hours towards FYS and one-time course releases for course redesign/development programs. For instance, estimates based on the average number of students completing 124-hour degree programs in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences in the last 5 years suggest that CLAS alone could capture over 8000 credit hours per academic year by adopting this reduction.

• The development of redesigned and hybrid courses, as outlined in the last section of this report, will allow for increased teaching efficiency and continued or increased enrollment in large courses, while simultaneously increasing student engagement and learning outcomes in these courses.

Cohort Learning: A majority of our peer institutions also provide opportunities for cohort learning and common intellectual experiences beginning in students’ first year (see Appendix III-B for a summary). The goals of these experiences are to create common ground for discussion, encourage intellectual exchange outside of the classroom, give students a sense of community, and help students establish social bonds at the university. Many common intellectual experiences, moreover, are interdisciplinary, and thus encourage students to make “big picture” connections across different areas of their learning. Cohort learning can take many forms, including:

• blocked enrollment of students to create groups of students in the same courses;

• learning communities consisting of linked courses on a common theme with or without 1-credit hour bridge courses; or

• living-learning communities in which students with common intellectual interests are housed together and may possibly take a block of courses together.

In some cohort learning models, first-year seminars or university orientation courses are used to identify the cohorts and are therefore included among the linked courses. Cohort learning models can also be adapted for students entering the major or undertaking capstone experiences. Research on cohort learning, and learning communities in particular, suggests that they are positively related to: student engagement, persistence (especially for underrepresented groups), higher grades, and increased higher-order thinking skills in undergraduate students.
Energizing the Educational Environment: Strategic Planning Recommendations

At KU, there are few opportunities for first-year students to participate in common intellectual experiences. KU offered a living-learning community (LC) program between 2003 and 2008. As part of this program, small cohorts of students were enrolled in two core courses (typically large introductory classes) and a 1-credit hour bridge course taught by a faculty facilitator or staff member. Students lived in a common dormitory block along with a peer educator who organized social activities for the group. Initial projections for student involvement after five years (2000 students) quickly proved to be unrealistic, but each year of the program evidenced significant increases in student and faculty involvement, with over 700 students and 18 faculty members participating by 2008, up from 131 students and 7 faculty in the first year. Students in the learning communities showed notably higher retention rates when compared to students with similar high school GPAs who were not in the learning communities. Nonetheless, the program faced some challenges and was discontinued in 2008 due to budget cuts. Among the most significant challenges was that in spite of the increasing numbers after 5 years the learning communities were reaching only a small percentage of KU students and faculty. Furthermore, the primary focus of the program was student success and retention, and academic components were underemphasized as compared to successful, long-standing learning community programs at other large research universities (e.g., University of Missouri). There was little cross-talk or collaboration among instructors of the core courses and the bridge course, which was taught as an “overload.”

Although the LC program was discontinued by Student Success in 2008, the School of Engineering considered the program to be so compelling that they found ways to support and continue it, suggesting that learning communities are an important element of student engagement at KU. Moreover, in the 2010 report of KU's NSSE (National Survey of Student Engagement) data, almost half of freshmen respondents indicated an interest in participating in learning communities (up from about one fourth in 2007). Given the high level of student interest combined with the empirical evidence that cohort learning and learning communities are highly effective in promoting student persistence and intellectual development, we recommend the development of multiple opportunities for cohort learning at KU, beginning in the first year. The previous KU learning community program has yielded critical insights into the sorts of models will be most successful in the KU environment. As with FYS, we suggest an iterative gradual development process. The first phase could begin with the implementation of blocked course enrollment, perhaps around common intellectual themes, for incoming freshmen. The results of the blocked enrollment program could then inform the development of learning community pilots the following year. This development would require identifying and incentivizing a select group of faculty to serve as faculty leaders in this initiative and to design and implement learning community pilots. An academic component should be at the core of all cohort learning activities, and they should be coordinated under a central academic unit. Learning community leaders could partner with a Center for Experiential Learning to identify ways to channel students into experiential learning opportunities and facilitate the extension of learning communities beyond the first year. Each year, the results of the cohort learning projects should be reviewed in order to refine plans for further implementation and shared with the KU community to increase awareness of the impact of these practices.

Common book programs are another shared intellectual experience that can promote a sense of community and encourage intellectual exchange outside the classroom. In common book programs, all incoming students are asked to read the same book, activities and discussion groups are programmed around the book, and faculty are encouraged to incorporate it into their classes. Common book programs are quite widespread, with hundreds of colleges and universities now offering them. Institutions with common book programs report that the programs are highly valued because they:

- create shared intellectual experiences;
- produce opportunities for faculty and students to interact;
- cultivate small group learning activities;
- promote a culture of learning outside the classroom; and
**Energizing the Educational Environment: Strategic Planning Recommendations**

- create academic traditions that can engage the entire university community.

Furthermore, many of these programs encourage participation by alumni and local community members.

*We recommend that KU institute a common book program as this may to be the easiest to implement of all of the engaged learning initiatives being explored* (see Appendix III-E). There is already support at KU for a common book program; the libraries and Student Success recently collaborated on a common book proposal (see Appendix III-B). Our recommendation is that the book program be administered by a central academic unit and involve cross-campus partnerships with multiple units such as the libraries, housing, and new student orientation. First steps would involve establishment of a cross-campus book selection committee to oversee book selection and programming of common book activities, followed by the development of a nomination process open to the entire campus and alumni for book selection, prioritizing nominations that link to strategic initiatives. *We also recommend that KU use the Common Book Program to engage students before they arrive on campus. Incoming students could receive a copy of the book, along with a letter from the Provost or Chancellor, once they have paid their deposits.* Once students arrive on campus, the success of the program will depend on the integration of Common Book activities into the first-year experience. Common Book activities should be integrated into Hawk Week, with stipends offered to faculty who volunteer to lead discussion groups or other common book activities. Faculty should be encouraged to incorporate the book into their courses. The common book activities should include a campus visit with by the book author, with discussion and activities in a variety of settings.

**B) Beyond the First Year**

Research on undergraduate student engagement in educationally purposeful, experiential learning activities such as research, community-engaged learning, and study abroad shows that these activities are also related to student engagement and higher rates of retention and timely graduation (see Appendix III-D). These activities, moreover, can help students translate and synthesize their academic skills and knowledge into new settings and to explore career paths or possibilities for deeper learning. KU has already made progress in developing experiential learning opportunities for students: we have high rates of participation in study abroad relative to peer institutions, the establishment of the Center for Service Learning in 2005 has increased student and faculty involvement in community-engaged learning, and KU has developed several engaged learning certificate programs (e.g., Research Experiences Program, Service Learning Certificate) for undergraduate students. KU’s strengths in these areas were recognized in 2011 when we received the Carnegie classification as an Engaged Campus. Yet a minority of undergraduate students at KU participates in these educationally-purposeful activities and faculty involvement is uneven. Furthermore, support for involving students in undergraduate research is not systematic and lags behind that of the other forms of experiential learning.

Strategic actions that encourage a culture of student and faculty commitment to educationally-purposeful, experiential learning will capitalize on KU’s strengths to produce positive learning outcomes. *We recommend that KU promote widespread student access and engagement with experiential learning activities by adopting an experiential learning product requirement for all undergraduate students.* Such products could include but would not be limited to:

- a paper or presentation based on undergraduate research
- an exhibit or portfolio
- a performance
- a service learning project
- a report on study abroad experiences, or
- completion of a certificate program

Experiential learning products could be produced in a number of contexts, including
Energizing the Educational Environment: Strategic Planning Recommendations

- capstone courses
- honors theses or undergraduate research
- internships or practica
- field work
- performance productions, or
- study abroad

First-year seminars and learning communities should serve as mechanisms for channeling students into experiential learning “tracks” to increase early and continued involvement in these activities. One credit-hour online planning courses in the majors will also inform students about research, internship, and other experiential learning activities available to them. Several supporting activities are necessary before implementing the graduation requirement.

- The creation of a Center for Experiential Learning would centralize support for undergraduate research, service learning, study abroad, and internships. This center could develop and host an on-line, searchable clearinghouse of experiential learning opportunities for faculty and students, taking the form of a student-faculty match system.

- Departments with undergraduate programs must identify experiential learning opportunities and courses that yield meaningful and substantial experiential learning products. Departments could then work with the Center for Experiential Learning to develop and expand opportunities for experiential learning. Integrating experiential learning into courses increases their accessibility to all students, therefore departments should be encouraged to integrate some opportunities into capstone and other classes. The center could also help departments identify and integrate study abroad opportunities into undergraduate curricula.

- Working with the Center for Experiential Learning, a cross-campus committee of faculty and professional staff should be convened to develop guidelines and a proposal process for certifying courses that yield experiential learning products.

Once these basic supports for expanding experiential learning opportunities are in place, we recommend that KU institute the experiential learning product requirement for all undergraduates. We also recommend that KU adopt an e-portfolio system to create an archive of student experiential learning products and facilitate evaluation of student learning. Finally, enhancing financial support for study abroad, increasing funding for undergraduate research, and offering undergraduate travel awards for conference presentations or other scholarly activities would increase the feasibility these educationally-purposeful activities for all students.

IV) 21st Century Course Redesigns

Practices that promote engagement within courses are accessible to all students and are likely to have a broad impact on student persistence, time to graduation, and student learning. Such practices can promote a significant new educational culture at KU, one that can establish a solid foundation for enlivening teaching and learning across campus. Research indicates that when students take an active participatory role in their own learning within their courses, learning and other positive educational outcomes are enhanced (see Appendix III-C for a review). The traditional and widespread model of undergraduate teaching, which emphasizes the role of the instructor as a deliverer of information, was developed in an era when access to information was expensive and not widely available. Course redesigns that take advantage of today’s widespread availability of information, and move students from a passive role in the classroom (e.g., note taking) to an active learning orientation, can enhance student engagement and learning, persistence, and timely graduation. Courses that are student-centered and ask students to engage in learning tasks that require problem solving, writing and collaboration produce multiple positive educational outcomes. Although these practices are easier to implement and therefore more common in small enrollment courses, recent work has tackled large enrollment courses, taking advantage of 21st century
Energizing the Educational Environment: Strategic Planning Recommendations

technology to find ways to make these courses highly collaborative, hands-on, engaging, and facilitative of deep learning. For instance, the SCALE-UP model developed at North Carolina State University (Biechner & Saul, 2003), now successfully adopted at numerous other institutions, applies a studio model and uses interactive technologies to redesign large-enrollment “barrier” courses, such as introductory physics. The transformed courses yield significant gains in student understanding and pass rates, often with virtually non-overlapping distributions as compared to the traditional course sections.

The National Center for Academic Transformation (NCAT) : [http://www.thencat.org/] has also promoted large-scale course redesigns at over 30 institutions (research universities, comprehensive universities, private colleges) to address higher education’s significant challenges, including offering quality education and improving persistence while expanding access and institutional capacity and reducing costs. NCAT has developed several redesign models, but all involve transforming courses to be more student-centered and more problem-centered. Redesigns shift the instructor’s role from information delivery to facilitation of learning, and emphasize technology for information delivery and student collaboration, although different models emphasize the online component to varying degrees.

Course redesign programs also represent an emerging strength at KU. For instance, the Center for Teaching Excellence hosts two course redesign programs each year, one as a 2-day intensive workshop and the other as a semester-long faculty seminar. Many of the faculty participants in these programs have developed online portfolios describing their course transformations and their effects on student learning in this extensive gallery on the CTE website [http://www.cte.ku.edu/gallery/index.shtml]. The other major effort is a three-year project, funded by the Spencer and Teagle Foundations, that is designed to improve undergraduate students’ writing and critical thinking skills in large undergraduate courses and to systematically assess student learning at research universities. Faculty members collaborate with the KU Writing Center and the Libraries to develop a series of staged and scaffolded assignments that target these skills. Some of the funds support Graduate Student Fellows who receive supplemental training from the KU Libraries and Writing Center, and then use these skills to assist with course and assignment design and to support undergraduates’ work in the target course. To date, 10 faculty members from 8 disciplines have redesigned and implemented their courses with encouraging results: students in the redesigned courses make significant gains in critical thinking and writing skills over the semester, and these gains are greater than what is observed in the traditional (control) courses.

We recommend that KU use large-scale course redesign to promote deep learning and higher order thinking skills and efficient use of human, space and technological resources. Redesigns of large-enrollment, introductory classes would reach a wide audience and therefore could produce transformational change in the undergraduate experience at KU. First steps in promoting large-scale course redesign for transforming undergraduate education will involve recruiting and incentivizing selected faculty to redesign courses around high-impact and evidence-based practices, and cultivate visible faculty leaders. The most adaptive models will begin with “backwards design,” in which the faculty member identifies goals for student learning in the course and then works backwards to design course components that connect with each goal. Learning outcomes, or the degree to which students meet goals, can be used to refine either the learning goals or the course design over time. This model will be especially effective for the design of courses that address core curriculum goals. To support course redesigns, KU should engage multiple units on campus (CTE, Libraries, Writing Center, CSL, and technology units) to develop course design studios, and enhance and expand course redesign workshops and faculty seminars. An iterative process of evaluating the learning and engagement outcomes in the redesigned courses will be critical to the success of these efforts; the results of pilot redesigns should be used to refine course and redesign models for the next wave of redesigns. Making the results of course redesigns public will help promote these efforts and lead to a spread of effect. The analysis of course redesign effects on student learning and engagement will necessitate mechanisms for collecting and reviewing meaningful and authentic
Energizing the Educational Environment: Strategic Planning Recommendations

evidence of student learning and understanding. To this end, we recommend the adoption of an e-portfolio system to archive student work that could be mined for student learning “data” at multiple levels of analysis (i.e., achievement of specific course goals, Core Curriculum goals). Once an initial pilot is complete KU should also consider targeting large entry-level classes and courses with high DFW rates for the next wave of redesigns. Hybrid designs with substantial on-line components for information delivery and student collaboration may be especially effective models for supporting deep learning and skill acquisition in large-enrollment courses. Finally, requiring all core curriculum courses to contain a substantial active or engaged learning component would both motivate redesign efforts and ensure that most undergraduate students have the opportunity to take one or more of these redesigned courses. A system of faculty incentives, such as stipends or course releases for participation in a design seminar, will also be critical to the success of these efforts. Course releases could be supported through the mechanisms outlined above in the first-year section.
EEE Strategic Action I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Action:</th>
<th>Establish a new KU Core Curriculum for all Undergraduate Students</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why (optional):</td>
<td>The current “General Education” requirements are College-based, overly complex, and too burdensome for BA majors. All KU undergraduate students would benefit from a common core of courses and experiences that are linked to educational goals and focused on learning outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Group:</td>
<td>Energizing the Educational Environment—General Education subgroup</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| List of Units Responsible/Involved: | Provost Office  
Undergraduate curricular committees of the College and Schools |
| List of Stakeholders Affected: | KU undergraduate students  
KU faculty and staff |
| Comments of Urgent Issues: | |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity 1: Share draft Educational Goals and Learning Outcomes with KU community</th>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>2011-12</th>
<th>2012-13</th>
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</thead>
</table>
|                                                                                  | Provost Office | Spring 2011  
Share goals and outcomes with critical leaders (Faculty Senate, Deans, and Chairs).  
Open dialog with all stakeholders (Town Hall meetings, etc.).  
Finalize Educational Goals and Learning Outcomes.  
Obtain approval from relevant groups to establish a new university-wide KU Core Curriculum based on goals and outcomes (College and School Curriculum Committees, Governance, Regents, and others?) |
### Activity 2: Develop recommendations for curriculum tied to Goals and Outcomes

**Provost Office**

**Summer-Fall 2011**
Design and propose the best activities to achieve learning outcomes (coursework, engaged learning, integrative capstone experiences, etc.)

- Establish required number of hours for each category
- Determine procedure for nominating courses to meet requirements.
- Generate options for reviewing student learning, providing evidence of learning, demonstrating achievement of outcomes, and using review process to revise and improve curricula.

### Activity 3: Propose oversight administration of KU Core Curriculum

**Provost Office**

**Spring 2012**
Establish a KU Core Curriculum Committee.

- Coordinate with College and School curriculum committees.
- Integrate core curriculum into advising processes.
- Obtain approval from relevant groups (College and School Curriculum Committees, Governance, Regents, and others?)
### Relevant Outcomes

(could be one or all of the items listed on the [EEE strategic planning website](#).)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome #1: Improved retention and time to graduation rates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>o Metric 1-a: Percentage of students retained</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Metric 1-b: Percentage of students graduating in 4 years</td>
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<tr>
<th>Outcome #2 Students connected to KU intellectually and emotionally, from first-year through capstone experiences.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>o Metric 1-a: Student surveys of learning outcomes, senior and alumni surveys, National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Metric 1-b: Demonstrations of student learning associated with reviews of core courses</td>
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<th>Outcome #3 Students initiated for life-long learning through renewed, goal-based general education curricula.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>o Metric 1-a: Value-added on core learning outcome assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Metric 1-b: Student and alumni surveys</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### EEE Strategic Action II

**Strategic Action:** Integrate improved academic advising with academic mission focusing on key transitions in student careers from recruitment through graduation.

**Why (optional):** Advising should begin at recruitment and integrate seamlessly with the academic units, focusing on key points where student lose focus or direction. Too many undergraduates remain undeclared after 60 hours of coursework, making timely graduation difficult or impossible, and current advising structures do not facilitate movement from undecided to declared major status. KU should better coordinate and target advising to both improve student outcomes and realize savings.

**Working Group:** Energizing the Educational Environment—Advising and Intervention Subgroup

**List of Units Responsible/Involved:**
- Provost Office
- Office of Student Success
- Office of Admissions
- New Student Orientation
- University Advising Center
- CLAS Student Academic Services
- KU professional school programs

**List of Stakeholders Affected:**
- KU faculty and staff
- KU undergraduate students

**Comments of Urgent Issues:**

### Key Activities and Timeline

Provide broad summaries of the key activities for this strategic action.

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<tr>
<td>UR, Provost Office, Office of Admissions, Advising Units, Academic Programs</td>
<td>Fall 2011</td>
<td>Adopt early warning system and intervention procedures focusing on general education courses and first year students. Spring 2012</td>
<td>Develop a Virtual Majors Fair that can be used for recruitment and encouraging major choice.</td>
<td>Develop advising course on PSYC 102 model for majors/schools with &gt;150 majors to focus students on planning</td>
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**Energizing the Educational Environment: Strategic Actions**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity 2: Create a central academic unit to coordinate undergraduate advising</th>
<th>Provost Office</th>
<th>Restructure University Advising Center to focus on undecided students, and move decided students promptly to College and School Advisors</th>
<th>Assign pre-major students based on new broad interest codes to advisors in with training in area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create online modules for incoming students (students who have been admitted and paid deposit) to choose either major and degree or broad interest codes if undecided and formulate plan for four-year graduation.</td>
<td>coursework and experiential learning.</td>
<td>2011-2013 Centralize undergraduate advising/enrollment tools under KYOU portal.</td>
<td>Make greater use of ACT data to advise and prepare students for college work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centralize online undergraduate advising/enrollment tools under KYOU portal.</td>
<td>2011-2013 Centralize undergraduate academic resources (undergraduate catalogue, schedule of classes, advising resources) on the university website.</td>
<td>Fall 2011 Change University Advising Center (UAC) to Pre-Major Advising Center (PMAC) and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Activity 3: Adopt procedures for ensuring students make timely, achievable major choices

**Proposer:** Provost Office, Curricular committees of the College and Schools

#### Fall 2011
- Limit the number of course withdrawals over undergraduate career.
- Develop better “Plan B” advising for students who cannot meet admissions standards for first choice of major/school.

#### Fall 2012
- Position more advisors in academic departments/schools by Interest Code Teams.
- Disallow “pre-x” major after 70 hours; move either to major, BGS in LA&S or non-degree seeking status.

#### 2012-2013
- Build advising component into first-year courses.

#### 2011-2014
- Encourage “clear path” progression to majors and professional schools with qualified admissions.
- Develop better “clear path” progression to majors and professional schools with qualified admissions.

### Activity 4: Implement block enrollment in freshman year to construct cohorts

**Proposer:** Curricular committees of the College and Schools

#### Fall 2012
- Start block enrollment.
**Energizing the Educational Environment: Strategic Actions**

**Relevant Outcomes:** (could be one or all of the items listed on the [EEE strategic planning website](#).)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome #1: Improve retention and graduation rates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metric 1-a: Percentage of students retained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metric 1-b: Percentage of students graduating in 4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metric 1-c: Number of students with declared major at 60 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metric 1-d: Number of major changes after 90 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metric 1-e: Number of “caseload” advisors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metric 1-f: Reduced number of petitions pleading “advisor error”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome #2: Students empowered to make informed decisions about their learning through consistent, high-quality advising and mentoring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metric 1-a: Number of advisors with training in specific subject area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metric 1-b: Number of professional advisors in academic departments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome #3: Students connected to KU intellectually and emotionally, from first-year through capstone experiences.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metric 1-a: Improved scores on National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metric 1-b: Student and alumni surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metric 1-c: Alumni giving and rate of participation in KU events and programs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EEE Strategic Action III

Strategic Action: Create opportunities to engage first-year students in the intellectual life of the university, and facilitate transitions into second year and beyond.

Why (optional): KU is particularly weak in the availability of high-impact, engaged learning practices aimed at first-year students, and as a result first-year students have few opportunities for small course learning, shared intellectual experiences, or connecting with faculty members.

Working Group: Energizing the Educational Environment—Engaged Learning and Course Redesign Subgroup

List of Units Responsible/Involved:
- Provost Office
- New Student Orientation
- University Advising Center
- CLAS Student Academic Services
- KU academic departments and schools, curricular committees
- KU Libraries
- KU Writing Center
- Center for Teaching Excellence
- Center for Experiential Learning

List of Stakeholders Affected:
- KU faculty and staff
- KU undergraduate students

Comments of Urgent Issues:

Key Activities and Timeline
Provide broad summaries of the key activities for this strategic action.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity 1: Develop 3-credit hour, topical first year seminars (FYS)</th>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>2011-12</th>
<th>2012-13</th>
<th>2013-14</th>
<th>2014-15</th>
<th>2015-16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curricular committees in the College and Schools</td>
<td>2011-2012 Identify and incentivize selected faculty to design model FYS and cultivate faculty leaders to promote FYS development</td>
<td>2012-2013 Implement and publicize model/pilot FYS and refine plans for further course development and implementation. Engage appropriate</td>
<td>2015-2016 Enroll 50% of first-year students in FYS in Fall or Spring semester.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| Coordinate with academic advising units to build advising component into FYS. | campus units (e.g., CTE, Libraries, Writing Center, CSL, and technology units) to develop and implement course design workshops and online tutorials supporting FYS development. |
| Coordinate with academic advising units to build advising component into FYS. | campus units (e.g., CTE, Libraries, Writing Center, CSL, and technology units) to develop and implement course design workshops and online tutorials supporting FYS development. |
| Spring 2012 Develop course guidelines, alignment with core curriculum, and proposal process for FYS, coordinated by a central academic administrative unit. |  |
| Spring 2012 Develop course guidelines, alignment with core curriculum, and proposal process for FYS, coordinated by a central academic administrative unit. |  |
| Partner with the Center for Experiential Learning to identify ways to channel FYS students into experiential learning opportunities. |  |
| Partner with the Center for Experiential Learning to identify ways to channel FYS students into experiential learning opportunities. |  |
| Summer 2012 Integrate information about FYS into pre-first year academic planning and advising activities. |  |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity 2: Develop opportunities for cohort learning</th>
<th>Provost Office, undergraduate programs in departments, Center for Experiential Learning, advising units</th>
<th>Fall 2011 Coordinate cohort learning activities under central administrative academic unit.</th>
<th>Fall 2012 Partner with the Center for Experiential Learning to identify ways to channel students into experiential learning opportunities.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fall 2012 Partner with the Center for Experiential Learning to identify ways to channel students into experiential learning opportunities.</td>
<td>2012-2013 Implement blocked course enrollment for freshmen students to create learning cohorts.</td>
<td>2012-2013 Implement blocked course enrollment for freshmen students to create learning cohorts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2012-2013 Implement blocked course enrollment for freshmen students to create learning cohorts.</td>
<td>Identify and incentivize small number of faculty to design and implement learning community pilots and cultivate faculty leaders.</td>
<td>Identify and incentivize small number of faculty to design and implement learning community pilots and cultivate faculty leaders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2012-2013 Implement blocked course enrollment for freshmen students to create learning cohorts.</td>
<td>Spring 2013 Review cohort learning pilot results and refine plans for further implementation</td>
<td>Spring 2013 Review cohort learning pilot results and refine plans for further implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop and implement a nomination process open to entire campus and alumni for book selection, prioritizing nominations that link to strategic initiatives.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summer 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Send incoming students selected book after paying the enrollment deposit, with letter from the Provost or Chancellor both parents and the students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall 2011</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Integrate Common Book activities into Hawk Week and offer stipends to faculty who volunteer to lead Common Book activities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arrange extended visit to campus by</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Energizing the Educational Environment: Strategic Actions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relevant Outcomes:</th>
<th>(could be one or all of the items listed on the EEE strategic planning website.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ Outcome #1:</td>
<td>Improved retention and graduation rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Metric 1-a:</td>
<td>Percentage of students retained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Metric 1-b:</td>
<td>Percentage of students graduating in 4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Outcome #2:</td>
<td>Students connected to KU intellectually and emotionally, from first-year through capstone experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Metric 1-a:</td>
<td>Alumni giving and rate of participation in KU events and programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Metric 1-b:</td>
<td>Value-added on core learning outcome assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Metric 1-c:</td>
<td>National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) scores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Outcome #3:</td>
<td>Enriched educational experiences for students through experiential learning and redesigned courses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Metric 1-a:</td>
<td>Number of FYS offerings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Metric 1-b:</td>
<td>Percentage of students enrolling in FYS and participating in cohort learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Metric 1-c:</td>
<td>Value-added on core learning outcome assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Metric 1-d:</td>
<td>Student performance on unit-level learning outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Metric 1-e:</td>
<td>DFW rates at end of the first year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Metric 1-f:</td>
<td>Percentage of students participating in experiential learning opportunities (e.g., undergraduate research, study abroad, community-engaged learning) and completing certificate programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Metric 1-g:</td>
<td>NSSE scores</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**EEE Strategic Action IV**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Action:</th>
<th>Adopt an experiential learning product requirement for all undergraduate students.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why (optional):</td>
<td>An experiential learning product requirement would build on KU’s existing strengths to promote more widespread student access and engagement with educationally-purposeful experiential learning activities that are linked to a range of positive educational outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Group:</td>
<td>Energizing the Educational Environment—Engaged Learning and Course Redesign Subgroup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Units</td>
<td>Provost Office&lt;br&gt;Undergraduate Programs in Departments&lt;br&gt;Office of Study Abroad&lt;br&gt;Center for Service Learning&lt;br&gt;Center for Experiential Learning (see activities listed below)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsible/Involved:</td>
<td>KU faculty and staff&lt;br&gt;KU undergraduate students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 1:</td>
<td>Undergraduate programs in departments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Departments with</td>
<td>Contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate programs in departments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>identify experiential learning opportunities and courses that yield experiential learning products, such as undergraduate research, service learning, study abroad,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 2: Establish a Center for Experiential Learning to centralize support for undergraduate research, service learning, study abroad, and internships</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provost Office, undergraduate programs in departments, IT, curricular committees in the College and Schools</td>
<td>Begin activity Fall 2012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity 3: Departments with undergraduate programs work with Center for Experiential Learning to develop and expand undergraduate opportunities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate programs in departments and the Center for Experiential Learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity 4: Channel students into experiential learning tracks via FYS and learning communities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate programs in departments, Center for Experiential Learning, and advising units</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity 5: Adopt an e-portfolio system to create an archive of student experiential learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provost Office, undergraduate programs in departments, IT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Products and facilitate evaluation of student learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 6: Create an online, searchable clearinghouse of experiential learning opportunities for faculty and students (student-faculty match system)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 7: Develop guidelines and a proposal process for certifying courses that yield experiential learning products.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 8: Assist departments in identifying and integrating study abroad opportunities into undergraduate curricula.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Energizing the Educational Environment: Strategic Actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Products</th>
<th>Ongoing</th>
<th>Ongoing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activity 10:</strong> Enhance support for study abroad to increase feasibility for all students</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activity 11:</strong> Increase funding for undergraduate research</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activity 12:</strong> Offer undergraduate travel awards for conference presentations or other scholarly activities</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Relevant Outcomes:** (could be one or all of the items listed on the EEE strategic planning website.)

- **Outcome #1:** Improved retention and graduation rates
  - Metric 1-a: Percentage of students retained
  - Metric 1-b: Percentage of students graduating in 4 years

- **Outcome #2:** Students connected to KU intellectually and emotionally, from first-year through capstone experiences
  - Metric 1-a: Alumni giving and rate of participation in KU events and programs
  - Metric 1-b: Value-added on core learning outcome assessments
  - Metric 1-c: NSSE scores

- **Outcome #3:** Enriched educational experiences for students through experiential learning and redesigned courses
  - Metric 1-a: Percentage of faculty offering experiential learning opportunities (e.g., undergraduate research, community-engaged learning)
  - Metric 1-b: Percentage of students participating in experiential learning opportunities (e.g., undergraduate research, study abroad, community-engaged learning) and completing engaged learning certificate programs
  - Metric 1-c: Value-added on core learning outcome assessments
  - Metric 1-d: Student performance on unit-level learning outcomes
  - Metric 1-e: NSSE scores
EEE Strategic Action V

**Strategic Action:** Use large-scale course redesign to promote deep learning, higher order thinking skills, and efficient use of human, space, and technological resources.

**Why (optional):** Practices that utilize recent discoveries from research on teaching and learning and 21st century technology to promote active participation and deep learning within courses are accessible to all students and therefore will have the broadest impact on student persistence, time to graduation, and student learning.

**Working Group:** Energizing the Educational Environment—Engaged Learning and Course Redesign Subgroup

**List of Units Responsible/Involved:**
- Provost Office
- Curricular committees in the College and Schools
- Center for Teaching Excellence
- KU Information Technology
- KU Libraries
- KU Writing Center

**List of Stakeholders Affected:**
- KU faculty
- KU undergraduate students

**Comments of Urgent Issues:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity 1: Recruit and incentivize selected faculty to redesign courses around high-impact and evidence-based practices, and cultivate visible faculty leaders</th>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>2011-12</th>
<th>2012-13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provost Office, Curricular committees, undergraduate programs in departments, CTE, Writing Center, and IT</td>
<td>Begin activity 2011-2012</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 2:</td>
<td>Provost Office, Curricular committees, undergraduate programs in departments, CTE, Writing Center, and IT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage multiple units on campus (CTE, Libraries, Writing Center, CSL, and technology units) to develop course design studio, and enhance and expand course redesign workshops and faculty seminars</td>
<td>Begin activity 2011-2012</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity 3:</th>
<th>Undergraduate programs in departments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analyze results (learning outcomes) of pilot redesigns to refine course and redesign models, and make results public</td>
<td>Spring 2012 or Spring 2013 depending on implementation timing of pilots</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity 4:</th>
<th>Provost Office, undergraduate programs in departments, IT, Center for Experiential Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruit and incentivize new cohort of faculty to redesign courses, targeting entry level courses and courses with</td>
<td>Begin activity 2012-2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Energizing the Educational Environment: Strategic Actions

**Activity 5:** Adopt an e-portfolio system to archive student work and facilitate evaluation of course redesign effects on student learning
- Provost Office, undergraduate programs in departments, and IT
- Begin activity Fall 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relevant Outcomes: (could be one or all of the items listed on the EEE strategic planning website.)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ <strong>Outcome #1:</strong> Improved retention and graduation rates</td>
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<td>    o Metric 1-a: Percentage of students retained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ <strong>Outcome #2:</strong> Students connected to KU intellectually and emotionally, from first-year through capstone experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>    o Metric 1-a: Alumni giving and rate of participation in KU events and programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>    o Metric 1-b: Value-added on core learning outcomes assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>    o Metric 1-c: National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) scores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ <strong>Outcome #3:</strong> Enriched educational experiences for students through experiential learning and redesigned courses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>    o Metric 1-a: Number of redesigned courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>    o Metric 1-b: Percent of students who take a redesigned course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>    o Metric 1-c: Student learning outcomes in redesigned versus traditional courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>    o Metric 1-d: DFW rates in redesigned versus traditional courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>    o Metric 1-e: Value-added on core learning outcome assessments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Activity 6:** Require all approved core curriculum courses to contain a substantial active or engaged learning component
- Provost Office, undergraduate curricular committees in the College and Schools, Center for Experiential Learning
- Begin activity Fall 2012
**ENERGIZING THE EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT: STRATEGIC ACTIONS**

- Metric 1-f: Student performance on unit-level learning outcomes
- Metric 1-g: NSSE scores
Energizing the Educational Environment Work Group Process

The Energizing the Educational Environment work group (EEE) consisted of three subgroups, with designated conveners:

General Education (Haufler)
Advising and Intervention (Cudd)
Engaged Learning and Course Redesign (Greenhoot)

The subgroups met independently of one another from mid-November to early February while participating in research and outreach activities. The full EEE work group reconvened in mid-February to review recommendations put forward by each subgroup and to begin crafting an integrated plan to engage and support undergraduate students from recruitment through graduation.

General Education process

The process of renewing General Education at KU started with gathering input from the KU community. Students, staff, faculty, and alumni (those having completed an undergraduate degree between 2000 and 2005) received online surveys during September and October asking them to name their top three learning goals for a KU undergraduate education. After compiling the results of more than 700 individual surveys, departments were invited to provide feedback on priority learning goals using a follow-up online survey. Chris Haufler, co-chair of EEE, met with faculty from seven KU Schools to discuss this process and to answer questions. In December 2010, Dr. Todd Little and staff from the KU Research Design and Analysis Unit conducted statistical analysis on the results from the more than 40 departments and 500 individual faculty members, student focus group participants, and alumni focus groups who contributed to the prioritization process. These results were used by the General Education subgroup as a starting point for drafting new learning goals and outcomes that incorporated KU’s existing goals and survey data.

In addition to the online surveys, the General Education subgroup solicited feedback about general education from several focus groups. An alumni focus group took place over Homecoming Weekend. Chris Haufler also met with and received feedback from two KU alumni advisory boards. Three student focus groups took place in mid-November.

Concurrent with the focus groups and survey process, members of the General Education subgroup conducted research on general education programs at AAU institutions. Subgroup members looked at a range of topics including the total number of credit hours for general education, first year seminars and experiential learning requirements within general education, university-wide versus school-specific models, assessment practices for general education courses, and mechanisms for curriculum review. The development of new learning goals and outcomes was also informed by the findings from this research.
General Education Renewal: Project Plan

TIME

- Decision on recommendations
- Share with departments for input
- Report to governance for discussion
- Share recommendations via Town Hall meetings for feedback & filtering
- Feedback
- Work Group: Formulate recommendations
- Review Gen Ed programs at AAU peer institutions
- Share summary with departments/schools for feedback & prioritizing
- Seek opinions from broad KU constituencies

Number of participants

Many → Few → Many
Advising and Intervention process

The Advising and Intervention subgroup started with presentations providing a comprehensive overview of KU advising. Kathryn Nemeth-Tuttle, Assistant Vice-Provost for Student Success, discussed New Student Orientation; Kelli Nichols, Assistant Director of the University Advising Center, presented information on first-year advising practices in the UAC; Nils Gore, Associate Professor of Architecture and Nelda Godfrey, Clinical Associate Professor of Nursing, presented information on professional school advising; and Kim McNeley, Assistant Dean of CLAS Undergraduate Services, discussed the student transition to major-field advising and graduation advising. Members of the subgroup also reviewed information about why students leave KU (Summer 2010 UAC calling data and Fall 2010 Intervention Pilot Program), the process for assigning advising holds to student enrollment, and advising training for faculty.

Members of the Advising and Intervention subgroup researched advising web resources for KU students, including information for prospective and admitted students, students in the first-semester at KU, undecided students, decided students transitioning into a major, and students who are not admitted to the program of their choice. The subgroup also met with Paul Atchley to discuss to possible development of online advising modules, which would transition students into the university and from undecided to decided status. Paul Atchley gave a presentation on the PSYC 102 online orientation course.

A student advising survey supplemented the information from presentations and research activities. Two hundred students were surveyed about their advising experiences using the Student Voice System in Mrs. E’s dining hall in mid-December (see Appendix II-A for survey questions and summary data).

Engaged Learning and Course Redesign process

The Engaged Learning and Course Redesign subgroup (ELCR) began by collecting data on high impact practices at 30 AAU institutions. The group compiled the following information for each institution:

- First year seminars
  - Required or optional?
  - Common focus?
  - Team taught?
  - Research experience?
- Capstone courses
  - Required or optional?
  - Discipline-specific?
  - Interdisciplinary?
- Course redesign projects
  - How are large courses managed and what technology do they use?
    - Discussion sections
    - Blackboard or some other LMS
    - Clickers
- Experiential learning/engaged learning opportunities
  - Learning communities
  - Undergraduate research
- Service learning
- Study abroad
- Other opportunities/special programs

Based on this preliminary research, members of the ELCR subgroup identified a short list of practices for further investigation that were (a) supported by evidence of effectiveness, (b) build on KU’s existing strengths or infrastructure, or (c) were intriguing for some other reason. The ELCR subgroup also considered what practices had the best potential to address EEE work group objectives (improving retention, graduation rates, and/or student engagement at all levels) and would be sustainable at KU. The ELCR subgroup worked in teams over the winter break to acquire additional information about the following practices: first-year experiences, common intellectual experiences (learning communities and other cohort learning models), undergraduate research, course redesign, and experiential learning and global opportunities. This phase of research involved a thorough review of empirical work and contacting institutions to determine keys to success and potential barriers for implementing these high impact practices.

Several presentations contributed to the research findings of the ELCR subgroup. Paul Klute from the Office of Institutional Research and Planning reviewed KU data from the National Survey of Student Engagement for the subgroup; Andi Witczak, Director of the Center for Service Learning, presented on opportunities and barriers for engaged learning at KU; Chancellor Gray-Little met with a small number of subgroup members to discuss how first-year seminars were implemented at the University of North Carolina; and Kathryn Nemeth Tuttle met with Andrea Greenhout and Sarah Crawford-Parker to discuss retention and other data compiled from KU’s former Learning Communities Program (2003-2008) and accomplishments, challenges, and recommendations outlined in the final program report. These conversations, along with two faculty focus groups held in mid-February on engaged learning, helped to guide the subgroup’s final recommendations.

The ELCR subgroup arrived at a list of final recommendations through two rounds of voting in which potential action items were ranked according to importance and feasibility. Members of the subgroup also voted on the sequence in which action items would be implemented and whether implementation would take place gradually or all at once (see Appendix III-E).