

Results of The Assessment of General Education: 2002, 2003, and 2004
Executive Summary
Highlights

Trends in the Faculty and Student Ratings

Overall, faculty rate students' attainment on the 6 Goals of General Education to be about a 3.5 on a 5-point scale, while students rate their own attainment to be about a 3.8.

Rating scale:

1-little or no attainment 2-below avg attainment 3-avg attainment 4-above avg attainment 5-outstanding attainment

The 6 goals of general education can be grouped according to two separate emphases. Goals 1 – 3 pertain to the acquisition of specific academic skills, knowledge, and the ability to integrate that knowledge across disciplines. Goals 4 – 6 pertain to the development of social awareness; an understanding and appreciation of the complexities of society; and sense of social responsibility. The results of the assessment process break neatly along these lines.

Regardless of academic discipline, all students who participated in the assessment process believed themselves to be more proficient in the acquisition of specific academic skills and knowledge, than did the faculty. Students consistently rated themselves highest on goals 1-3 – enhancing the knowledge needed to research, organize, evaluate, and apply new information; acquiring knowledge and integrating it across disciplines; and improving the core skills of reading, writing, and numeracy. Faculty consistently rated students lowest on these goals.

Conversely, faculty consistently rated students highest on goals 4-6, and in particular, goal 6, pertaining to practicing an ethic of self-discipline, social responsibility, and citizenship. Students consistently rated themselves lower on the social framework goals.

The widest discrepancies between faculty and student ratings were on the 3 academic skills goals, highlighting the differing perceptions between faculty and students on their level of attainment on these goals. The narrowest discrepancies were on the social framework goals. Although these goals were the highest rated by the faculty and the lowest rated by the students, the narrow gap between ratings suggests that faculty and students agree that students' attainment on these goals is in the moderate range.

Trends in the Goal Attainment Survey

Students in the professional schools consistently rate, “preparing students to succeed in a first job after graduation,” to be KU’s **most important** institutional goal. The institutional goals rated **most important** by students in the College correspond directly to the general education goals that address academic skills (goals 1 – 3). They identified, “to teach students to think critically and integrate knowledge,” “to stimulate intellectual curiosity and innovative thinking,” and “to read, write, and speak correctly.”

In 2004, students rated KU **most successful** in, “providing physical fitness programs and facilities for students,” a direct reflection of the opening of the new Student Recreation Center. Prior to 2004, students rated KU as **most successful** in, “providing students an in-depth understanding of at least one specialized area of knowledge.” KU was also rated as very successful in “maintaining a program of extracurricular activities for students,” and in “enabling students to participate in study abroad programs.”

The goals students rated as **least important**, they also rated KU as **least successful** in meeting. In 2003 and 2004 students rated, “teaching students to read and write in a second language,” to be the least important and the least successfully met goal. In 2002, that goal was, “teaching students about the relationship between the physical environment and society.”

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Background

The Assessment of General Education is an annual activity occurring with a rotating set of three professional schools, and one area within the College. It involves individual interviews between students and teams of three faculty, to ascertain students' attainment of the Goals of General Education.

GOALS OF GENERAL EDUCATION

1. Enhance the skills and knowledge needed to research, organize, evaluate, and apply new information and develop a spirit of critical inquiry and intellectual integrity.
2. Acquire knowledge in the fine arts, the humanities, and the social, natural, and mathematical sciences and be able to integrate that knowledge across disciplines.
3. Improve the core skills of reading, writing, and numeracy, and enhance communication by clear, effective use of language.
4. Understand and appreciate the development, culture, and diversity of the United States and of other societies and nations.
5. Become aware of contemporary issues in society, technology, and the natural world and appreciate their complexity of cause and consequences.
6. Practice an ethic of self-discipline, social responsibility, and citizenship on a local, national, and international level.

ATTAINMENT OF THE GOALS OF GENERAL EDUCATION

Both faculty and students rated students' attainment on each of the six Goals of General Education. Students made judgments about their own level of goal attainment based on experience, and faculty based their judgments on answers to interview questions specifically designed to measure each goal.

Ratings were based on a 5-point scale:

- 1 – little or no attainment
- 2 – below average attainment
- 3 – average attainment
- 4 – above average attainment
- 5 – outstanding attainment

Results are based on interviews from students in the following disciplines by year:

2002: Social Sciences, Engineering, Architectural Engineering, Journalism, and Social Welfare.

2003: Natural Sciences and Mathematics, Education, Fine Arts, and Pharmacy.

2004: Humanities, Architecture, and Business.

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Trends in student and faculty ratings are consistent across years, regardless of students' academic disciplines.

- **Students rate themselves HIGHEST on the goals 1 and 3, pertaining to academic skills:**
 - Improve the core skills of reading, writing, and numeracy, and enhance communication by clear, effective use of language (mean rating: 4.02 in 2002, 3.87 in 2003, 4.04 in 2004).
 - Enhance the skills and knowledge needed to research, organize, evaluate, and apply new information and develop a spirit of critical inquiry and intellectual integrity (mean rating: 3.98 in 2002, 3.86 in 2003, 4.12 in 2004).
- **Faculty rate students HIGHEST on goal 6, pertaining to social responsibility:**
 - Practice an ethic of self-discipline, social responsibility, and citizenship on a local, national, and international level (mean rating: 3.79 in 2002, 3.72 in 2003, 3.75 in 2004).
- **Students rate themselves LOWEST on goals pertaining to cultural awareness and the impact of contemporary issues in society:**
 - Understand and appreciate the development, culture, and diversity of the United States and of other societies and nations. (ranked 6th out of the 6 goals in 2002 and 2003).
 - Become aware of contemporary issues in society, technology, and the natural world and appreciate their complexity of cause and consequences (ranked 6th out of the six goals in 2004).
- **Faculty rate students LOWEST on goals 1 and 2, pertaining to academic skills:**
 - Enhance the skills and knowledge needed to research, organize, evaluate, and apply new information and develop a spirit of critical inquiry and intellectual integrity (ranked 5th out of the 6 goals in 2002, 2003, and 2004).
 - Acquire knowledge in the fine arts, the humanities, and the social, natural, and mathematical sciences, and be able to integrate that knowledge across disciplines. (ranked 6th out of the 6 goals in 2002, 2003, and 2004).
- **The greatest discrepancy between faculty and student ratings is on goal 1, where faculty consistently rated students lowest, but students consistently rated themselves highest:**
 - Enhance the skills and knowledge needed to research, organize, evaluate, and apply new information and develop a spirit of critical inquiry and intellectual integrity (mean discrepancy: -.41 in 2002, -.60 in 2003, -.76 in 2004).

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- **Faculty and student ratings are most convergent on goal 6, although these ratings represent the highest given by faculty, but only relatively represent moderate ratings by students:**
 - Practice an ethic of self-discipline, social responsibility, and citizenship on a local, national, and international level (faculty mean ratings: 3.79 in 2002, 3.72 in 2003, and 3.75 in 2004; student mean ratings: 3.96 in 2002, 3.76 in 2003, and 3.91 in 2004).

GOAL ATTAINMENT SURVEY

Students rated the importance of 35 institutional goals and KU's success in meeting those goals.

Ratings were based on a 10-point scale:

1 – least important (least successful) through
10 – most important (most successful)

Goals rated as most important, were consistent across years.

- **Students rated the following institutional goals MOST IMPORTANT:**
 - To prepare students to succeed in a first job after graduation (mean rating: 9.30 in 2002, 9.26 in 2003, 9.49 in 2004).
 - To teach students to think critically and to integrate knowledge (mean rating: 9.27 in 2002, 9.23 in 2003, 9.24 in 2004).
- **In 2004 students depart from previous years' by rating KU MOST SUCCESSFUL in meeting the following institutional goal, in acknowledgment of the new Student Recreation Center:**
 - To provide physical fitness programs and facilities for students (8.72 in 2004, up from 6.29 in 2002 and 6.84 in 2003)
- **Prior to 2004, students rated the KU MOST SUCCESSFUL in meeting the following goals, which continue to be highly rated in 2004:**
 - To provide students an in-depth understanding of at least one specialized area of knowledge (mean rating: 8.48 in 2002, 8.33 in 2003, 8.46 in 2004).
 - To maintain a varied program of extracurricular activities for students (mean rating: 8.26 in 2002, 8.25 in 2003, 8.35 in 2004).

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Goals rated as least important and those KU is rated as least successful in meeting varied by year.

- **The goal students rated as LEAST IMPORTANT, they also rated KU as LEAST SUCCESSFUL in meeting:**

In 2002:

- To teach students about the relationship between the physical environment and society (mean importance rating: 7.09; mean success rating: 6.28).

In 2003 and 2004:

- To teach students to read and write in a second language (mean importance rating: 6.66 in 2003, 6.90 in 2004; mean success rating: 5.98 in 2003, 6.16 in 2004).

The GREATEST DISCREPANCY between rated importance and rated success varied by year.

In 2002:

- To prepare students to succeed in a first job after graduation (mean difference: 2.05).

In 2003:

- To assist students in making academic decisions (mean difference: 1.98).

In 2004:

- To hold all students to rigorous academic standards (mean difference: 2.29)