

# Progress Report

## Teaching and Learning

Progress Report: August 12, 2008

Implementation Leadership:

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Attached to the five recommendations from the initial task force on teaching and learning was a list of the characteristics of a successful student and the hallmarks of a KU graduate. It is within that context that the five recommendations emerged regarding teaching and learning.

In the fall of 2008 stakeholders will be asked to comment on Appendix A of the April 2008 Report: *Characteristics and Hallmarks*.

**Recommendation #1** begins with KU's expectations for our students and our ability to communicate those clearly to both current and prospective students. Implementation of comprehensive admissions standards is part of this recommendation. The changing of admissions practices has both an internal operational component and an external component that is determined by the State Legislature and the Kansas Board of Regents.

- We are testing the process of non-cognitive assessment with our scholarship applications this year. The external component is also underway but success depends on decisions at the State Level.
- KU presented recommendations to the state-wide Admissions Task Force in July 2008, recommending that admissions standards be set by the Kansas Board of Regents rather than state statute. The Regents can make timely adjustments to keep admissions standards up to date, where as changes to state statutes politicize and slow down the process of updating admissions standards.
- Admissions staff members from the Medical Center and Lawrence will share their respective expertise across campuses; with the Medical Center sharing their knowledge of interview based admissions practices and the Lawrence campus sharing their methods of doing essay-based assessments.

**Recommendations #2 and #4** address the defining and documenting of learner outcomes. There are robust examples currently in place at every KU campus of documenting learner outcomes.

- The Educational Objectives of the School of Medicine define key knowledge areas and demonstrations of competencies in those areas.
- The Provost Unit Initiative, led by Dan Bernstein, works with over 24 departments to develop active archives of student work; 12 additional units have been invited to participate in FY 09.

- University Senate has engaged a task force on Learner Outcomes.
- OIRP and the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs lead the General Education Assessment; FY 09 will be the year for reviewing the process of General Education Assessment.
- KU will be piloting in FY 09 the College Learning Assessment as a measure of the “value-added” by an undergraduate education at KU. Whereas General Education Assessments and major assessment focus on a specific component of the KU experience, the CLA strives to look at the university’s role if the whole student experience and measures competencies in analytical thinking, critical thinking, problem solving, and written communication.
- Student Success continues to scrutinize retention and graduation rates.

These are but a sampling of our on-going efforts to define and document learner outcomes.

Our next steps will be to strategically examine all of the types of outcome measures we use and discover whether they indeed measure what we value. What do we still need to learn about how our students learn and can we find ways to document that? Over the next two years teams of faculty will be invited to participate in that conversation on all campuses and at all levels of the university.

**Recommendation #3** looks toward the utilization of teaching methods and learning strategies that improve the learning environment for all students.

- Engaged experiences in communities of learners will likely be a large part of that effort.
- On August 19th, after participating in the Teaching Summit, the first think-tank of faculty representatives met [*will have met by convocation*] to begin the task of putting implementation strategies around this recommendation suggesting benchmarks for success in this area.
- Currently there are numerous opportunities for students to engage in the learning process through internships, research experiences, learning communities, clinical practice settings, global awareness programs and service learning.

**Recommendation #5** is a challenge to increase diversity of faculty, staff, and students.

- The Latino Vision council is a new initiative that is examining Latino diversity in higher education within the state of Kansas and identifying ways that KU should address the needs of future Latino college students.
- Dr. Patricia Thomas is the Associate Dean for Cultural Enhancement and Diversity at the Medical Center. She directs programs targeting students, faculty, and K-12 school children.
- Maurice Bryan, Associate Vice Provost for Diversity and Equity, is organizing groups on the Lawrence campus to establish a comprehensive diversity plan as well as a diversity council to coordinate and publicize activities already underway.

Diversity will be part of every strategic recommendation that comes forward. It will be implemented as part of the fabric of what we do, not the add-on program that completes this set of recommendations.