

## Action Project – Versions 1-5

---

### Table of Contents

Version 1: From LER to Kent Core.....	p. 1
Version 2: Kent Core Course Assessment I.....	p. 8
Version 3: Kent Core Course Assessment II (Assessment Criteria).....	p. 12
Version 4: Kent Core Course Assessment III (Application).....	p. 15
Version 5: Assessing the Kent Core (Phase One).....	p. 18
Version 5: Assessing the Kent Core (Phase Two).....	p. 22

---

<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Version 1: From LER to Kent Core</b>
<b>Created</b>	AY 2009-2010
<b>Updated</b>	AY 2009-2010
<b>Reviewed</b>	9-10-2009
<b>Status</b>	Version 1: Completed; Most Recent Version: Active

---

### Project Goal

Kent State University will develop and implement a new Liberal Education Program for its undergraduate students based on the work of the LER Core Committee with input from the university community

### Reasons for Project

The current LER program had grown over the years with little oversight - courses added, none discarded. With the proliferation of courses a coherent program no longer existed and it was impossible to assess student learning in an adequate manner. A provost's initiative to focus the university's attention on the learning needs of the 21st century undergraduate began in spring 2008. Out of this conversation, a new philosophy statement for undergraduate education at KSU was adopted. The next step is to reflect that philosophy throughout the undergraduate curriculum, including the LERs.

### Organizational Areas Affected

Academic Affairs Undergraduate Requirements Curriculum Committee  
Department/school/college curriculum committees Educational Policy council  
Faculty Senate Advising Centers - Student Services

### Key Organizational Process(es)

This revision will enhance advising process, retention efforts, and assessment of student learning

### Project Time Frame Rationale

There are several dimensions of this project that will engender a cultural shift at the university if successful. A cultural transformation takes a long time (much longer than this project is slated for) to occur. The university is undergoing a shift from a teaching paradigm to a learning paradigm. The model developed will embrace this shift. An understanding of what that means for students and faculty must be developed along with the model itself. Faculty professional development will be

integral to the project's success.

**Project Success Monitoring**

Designated implementation committee(s) will report to the Office of the Provost on a periodic basis.

**Project Outcome Measures**

Newly designed LER program. The implementation is slated to occur in Fall 2011.

---

**Project Update**

**Project Accomplishments and Status**

The 21st Century Liberal Education Requirements (LER) Core Committee was charged by Provost Robert Frank in September 2008 to review the LER requirements and make recommendations that would: 1) enhance the quality of the LER program; 2) improve the educational experience for undergraduate students; and, 3) reduce the complexity of the LER requirements in order to help students navigate the system more easily. The committee held its first meeting on October 1, 2008, and met weekly throughout the Fall 2008 semester and the first part of Spring 2009 semester. The Committee began by reviewing problems associated with the themes of complexity and navigability and compiled a list of these problems. With an understanding of the problems associated with the structure and organization of the LERs as currently constructed and the realities of the current educational environment clearly in mind, the committee thus focused its efforts on: 1) linking the LERs to the university's 21st century philosophy for undergraduate education; and, 2) enhancing the educational experience provided by the LERs for undergraduate students. In order to address these two goals, the Committee gathered data from a number of sources. Searching for models of best practice, committee members reviewed materials from more than 30 institutions from across the U.S., encompassing a broad range of LER programs. Student focus groups were conducted and URCC reports and surveys were reviewed. The Committee also returned to the materials and programs that had framed the basis for the development of the 21st century philosophy statement, in order to ensure that a revised LER system would be fully aligned with the objectives outlined in that document. On the basis of these reviews, the Committee formulated an approach to revising the LERs that was premised on the need to foster a learning-centered approach to education. The Committee determined that such an approach needed to be embedded in a positive learning environment, and fostered by learning outcomes centered around the four principles of Kent State's 21st century undergraduate philosophy: Knowledge, Insight, Engagement, and Responsibility. The Committee spent a great deal of time developing programmatic learning outcomes for each of the four elements of the 21st century education model, namely: Engagement, Knowledge, Insight and Responsibility. Within each of these categories, the Committee developed a set of developmentally and hierarchically-ordered program learning outcomes. Each of these program learning outcomes provides the basis for the development of appropriate learning outcomes for individual LER courses, and offers a clear guide as to the expectations for those outcomes. Recommendations in the report included: 1) Form an Implementation Task Force. 2) Require all courses to be re-submitted for

review by URCC in order to be eligible for continuing LER status. 3) Support robust faculty professional development efforts. 4) Require that all units carefully consider which courses align with the learning outcomes. 5) Promote opportunities for co-registration in LER courses 6) Encourage all units to submit all LER courses for approval within Ohio's Transfer Module Requirement. 7) Encourage and provide support for interdisciplinary course development 8) Provide incentives for the creation of quality learning experiences within the LERs. 9) Provide students with a capstone experience. 10) Encourage more university-wide participation in the LEAP projects of AAC&U. A team made up of faculty and administrators was charged in May 2009 and worked throughout the summer to develop an implementation plan. The curricular proposal developed follows closely the spirit of the material presented in the LER Core Committee report. The main benefit of adopting this proposal is to begin a shift from the “teaching” paradigm to a “learning” paradigm at Kent State University. The Kent Core Requirements consist of three broad components: Literacy, Knowledge, and Cultural Awareness. Students will be required to complete at least 36 credit hours of courses that will have been approved for inclusion in the Kent Core. It is recommended that the Literacy Component be completed within the student’s first 60 hours of coursework at Kent State, while the other components may be completed throughout the undergraduate program. All Kent Core courses may be used in any major or program, and students may use the Kent Core courses to fulfill program/major/minor requirements. None of the courses in the Kent Core may be taken pass/fail. Students in AA and AS degree programs will be deemed to have met Kent Core requirements if they complete requirements for the Transfer Module. Associate degree recipients wishing to complete baccalaureate degrees will be required to fulfill all Kent Core requirements. The Cultural Awareness component of the Kent Core shall be satisfied by taking one domestic and one global diversity course, from a list of approved diversity courses. At least one of the courses must also be from the list of Kent Core courses. The task force values highly the benefit of a laboratory experience for students, and proposes that a lab be required of all students. Appropriate fiscal resources must be provided for the departments to be able to offer these labs. Other policies In addition to the above student requirements, the following policies at the unit (department, school) or program level were proposed: 1. Since fulfilling the Kent Core program is a university requirement, no college, unit, program, major or minor may specify Kent Core requirements beyond those required by the University. Departments may elect to include specific Kent Core courses in their major requirements, however. Colleges may continue to specify college-wide requirements in addition to the Kent Core and major/minor requirements. 2. Academic programs that require specific Kent Core courses to meet accreditation/licensure requirements may mandate those courses IF the program can provide evidence that: a) the content in those particular courses is specified by the accrediting/licensing agency; and b) without this degree of program autonomy a student’s time to graduation would be prolonged. Clear and specific evidence of such accrediting/licensing requirements must be supplied for programs to be allowed to prescribe Kent Core courses. The Undergraduate Requirements Curriculum Committee (URCC) approved this curricular proposal on September 4, 2009.

### **Institution Involvement**

All committees were made up of faculty, administrators, advisors and students. Core committees had 12-15 members and stakeholder groups usually had 25 members representing all colleges. The LER Core Committee shared the learning outcomes

initially with the LER stakeholder group and received positive feedback and thoughtful suggestions with regard to the number, scope and structure of the outcomes. The stakeholder group also noted that such an approach would require appropriate support for faculty in order to foster necessary pedagogical innovation and develop appropriate assessment tools and techniques to match a learning outcomes approach. In order to share its agenda and its recommendations with the Kent State community, the Committee, under the leadership and guidance of its faculty co-chair and with the able assistance of colleagues from Educational Technology, built a website to provide both a conduit for information about the LERs and the materials being developed by the Committee, and a vehicle for discussion and debate through which to reach out to the campus community. In addition to posting the learning outcomes and the three proposed LER models on the website along with discussion boards to encourage widespread university input, the Committee held three Town Hall Meetings. Two of these were held on the Kent Campus and were audio recorded and web-streamed. The Committee chose this approach in order for those unable to attend in person to have access through the web or to be able to listen to the discussions at a later date. In addition to being audio recorded and web-streamed, the third Town Hall Meeting linked all eight campuses through v-tel and provided an opportunity for faculty and staff from all campuses to have input to the discussion and provide feedback to the Committee. Based on the feedback from the Town Hall Meetings, from the website discussion boards, from the Stakeholder Group, and from the Curriculum Committee, the LER Committee determined that while there appeared to be an appreciation of the strengths (and weaknesses) of each of the three models, Model B met with the broadest approval. The Implementation Team continued the use of the website and also met with focus groups throughout the summer- faculty, advisors and students – to receive feedback. Presentations were made to administrative groups such as Associate and Assistant Deans, Deans' Council and College Curriculum Committees concerning the proposal

### **Next Steps**

The next steps involve continued approval of the curriculum proposal within the governance structure of the university. The proposal will be presented to the Educational Policies Council on September 21 and if approved, will be presented at Faculty Senate on October 12, 2009. In the meantime the process of course development in conjunction with faculty development is moving forward. A series of workshops as described below is being planned and will be offered on a continuing basis during fall 2009 and spring 2010. The goal is to have all courses approved for full implementation of the Kent Core by fall 2011. Summary of FPDC Workshops: In order to help faculty adjust to the new Kent Core expectations, a series of workshops has been created that will support faculty members in developing the insights and tools necessary to prepare a high quality URCC proposal. The workshops will be constructed around the following format: Week One: The Learning Paradigm: What is it and what will it do for my students? Week Two and Three: Learning Outcomes: What are these things and how do I write them? Week Four: Assessing Learning Outcomes: How on earth do I assess this? Week Five: Learning Centered Teaching Strategies: What does this look like in class? Week Six: URCC Proposal Review: How does my proposal look? A plan to assess the Kent Core needs to be developed. The program is scheduled to be assessed in 2014, three years after full implementation

### **Resulting Effective Practices**

To jumpstart the process of transforming the university and particularly the courses within the LER curriculum, the Provost's Office funded nine Transformative Learning Grants (\$130,000) and six LER Summer grants (\$18,000). The Transformative Grants were awarded to departmental teams that wished to redesign a current LER course to emphasize and enhance engaged learning. Teams have been working and meeting monthly as a whole (all grant recipients) to share progress and ideas. The LER Summer grants were designed to give departments an opportunity to see how the learning outcomes proposed in the Kent Core model could be used within a current course. These recipients met throughout the summer. Both of these groups will be the first to submit their courses for approval by the URCC for the new Kent Core.

### **Project Challenges**

There are 120 courses currently approved for the LER program. The biggest challenge we face is the redesign and approval of these courses for inclusion in the fall 2011 undergraduate catalog. Along with the current courses that may wish to be approved for the Kent Core, the Kent Core now allows for upper division courses and interdisciplinary courses. These courses will need to be developed following the guidelines of the proposal and presented for approval. A funding model for the interdisciplinary courses needs to be developed. Beginning July 1, 2009, Kent State went to a new funding model – responsibility center management. This model will present challenges as we develop a means to account for costs and profits from interdisciplinary courses. Ongoing faculty development is a challenge. The shift from a teaching to a learning paradigm is new to many faculty. The Faculty Professional Development Center (fpdc) has a very small staff, so we are looking at “train the trainer” models in hopes this will relieve some of the pressure on the Center's staff.

---

## **Update Review**

### **Project Accomplishments and Status**

Kent State University is undertaking a significant challenge given the scope and magnitude of this Action Project. The institution has established a three-year timeframe for the design and implementation of a revised Liberal Education Requirement (LER) Program. At the directive of the provost, the committee is addressing a complex Action Project that will impact the “silo” model of program course requirements and phase in an educationally integrated model guided by the four principles of Kent State's 21st century undergraduate philosophy. The dimensions of this project, as identified by the institution, will impact multiple facets of high performing organizations. These include focus, collaboration, learning, and information. The charge to the team by the Provost to review and submit recommendations reflects a focus on the needs of future students. The proposed shift from a teaching-centric to learning-centric culture demonstrates recognition that it must evaluate program and course requirements to ensure and enhance student achievement. Collaboration between faculty and administration on various facets of this project can cement institutional support for proposed changes. Evidence of multiple measures for decision-making provides the data-based foundation for various recommendations. The committee is to be commended for aggressively addressing multiple aspects of this project in order to frame a successful foundation

for future implementation of the LER program. It established two broad, relative goals. The linkage of the LER program to the institution's 21st century philosophy will be relatively easy to demonstrate. The second goal, enhancing the undergraduate student's educational experience, may require the development of strategies and measurable outcomes to assess how the institution plans to achieve this. Multiple sources of qualitative data from reports and surveys as well as researching various models helped guide the committee's efforts. The ten resulting recommendations encourage an interdisciplinary, institutional approach that continues the LER impetus. The proposed Implementation Task Force as well as curriculum review and learning outcome initiatives demonstrate a planned systematic approach to integrating the provost's and committee's recommendations. The development of a timeline for each recommendation and the creation of a curriculum and learning outcomes alignment matrix could facilitate the program review efforts for faculty and staff. Kent State University has made reasonable, yet significant progress on this project through year one of its activities. The continued use of quality improvement tools and strategies coupled with data-based decision making can drive this Action Project to successful conclusion. Even though the three-year timeline of objectives is not provided, the remaining two years will provide an opportunity to continue the momentum of this effort and the cultural transition desired by the institution. The successful implementation of the proposed model will impact learning and educational achievement for the next generation of students.

### **Institution Involvement**

Kent State University encouraged stakeholder and student involvement through inception as well as planning and implementation of various objectives. Faculty, administrators, and advisors represent a diverse cross-section of internal stakeholder groups. The number of members on core committees and size of stakeholder groups encouraged broad input and governance. While composition of committees is not presented, representation of various disciplines, departments and institutional support units (learning resources, IT and bookstore, for example) can ensure input from all areas ultimately impacted by this Action Project. KSU's inclusion of students on committee membership offered opportunities for input and assures that the voice of the learner is heard. Comparing this input to student evaluations of instruction could provide an interesting correlation. The University offered many avenues for faculty and staff input. The use of the web to communicate the three possible LER models and to encourage discussion boards for feedback reflects the AQIP principle of involvement. Town Hall meetings allowing for linkage to all eight campuses also offered opportunities for interested stakeholders to voice the merits and weaknesses of proposed models. Audio recordings and web-streaming provides a record of feedback to ensure that all concerns are heard and addressed. It appears that KSU is striving to involve all in this project in order to communicate the impact of this educational initiative on various departments and units. Multiple avenues are available to encourage stakeholder feedback.

### **Next Steps**

Kent State University describes concurrent activities that will continue to evolve this project. Major steps include approval of course and curriculum proposals aligned with the LER model using the institution's governance structure and approval processes. Parallel to this transition to the learning-centered culture, a series of workshops are to be offered to faculty. The sequential series is framed by an

understanding of the new learning paradigm as well as possible teaching strategies and the development and assessment of revised learning outcomes. The FPDC series seems an aggressive program intended to provide the pedagogy integral to teaching and assessment within the new framework. It may be beneficial for KSU to continue to offer this series of workshops for current faculty for reinforcement as well as new hires and adjunct faculty to ensure that all instructors fully understand and apply the new philosophy. KSU has targeted LER program assessment for 2014, three years after the institution has fully implemented its new LER program model into coursework. This feedback loop is integral to the University's continuous student learning improvement efforts. Assessment of student learning at the course as well as program completion level can demonstrate the effectiveness of the new model in achieving desired outcomes. Such data will also assist in the development of benchmarks and trend lines essential for appropriate decision-making.

### **Resulting Effective Practices**

Funding of mini-grants provided the impetus for some departments to redesign courses to align with the new LER model. This financial investment encouraged faculty to address key issues and renovate curriculum. After teams achieve the goals of the mini-grants, feedback regarding their strategies and activities can assist other departments in this initiative. In this era of limited financial resources, the institution should be commended for this program. Continuing to provide Learning Grants to all departments as the curriculum conversion progresses can demonstrate the institution's financial commitment to this Action Project. This investment also reinforces institutional support for the transition to a student-centered culture.

### **Project Challenges**

Kent State University has identified three major challenges related to full implementation of the LER model. Redesign and approval of courses within the catalog deadline and determination of applicable courses for the LER are major undertakings. The University might consider developing an implementation timeline for each discipline to assist with a systematic process. Also, criteria for eliminating inactive or outdated courses could facilitate decision-making. The University recognizes the need to craft a new funding model for interdisciplinary courses in conjunction with its cost/profit analysis. The development of a task force researching alternative formulas can provide comparative data models for decision-making. Elements of the Kansas Study (Johnson County Community College) which tracks productivity by educational discipline might be helpful. On-going faculty development to instill the learning-centered model is vital to efforts to change the culture and craft valid assessments. While the suggested train-the-trainer model has merit, KSU might consider release time allowing one or two key faculty leaders to provide commensurate faculty development sessions on a consistent, focused basis.

---

<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Version 2: Kent Core Course Assessment I</b>
<b>Created</b>	AY 2009-2010
<b>Updated</b>	AY 2010-2011
<b>Reviewed</b>	10-25-2010
<b>Status</b>	Version 2: Completed; Most Recent Version: Active

---

## **Project Update**

### **Project Accomplishments and Status**

In December 2009, the Faculty Senate approved a proposal that established that Kent Core courses would be required to assess learning outcomes, and charged the University Requirements Curriculum Committee (URCC) with developing outcomes assessment templates and an approval process. In addressing the charge from the Faculty Senate, a subcommittee of the URCC adopted four primary objectives: 1) keep the process as simple as possible, 2) allow for considerable flexibility in definitions of learning outcomes and methods and reporting of assessment, 3) align with the learning objectives from the former LER requirements, and 4) acknowledge that the responsibility for monitoring the quality of outcomes and assessment and for continuous improvement in outcomes and assessment lies with the faculty at the department or school level. The proposed process is that any unit wanting to maintain Kent Core status for an existing Kent Core (formerly LER) course, or wanting to propose a new Kent Core course, will be required to complete the Outcomes Assessment Plan form. Those units proposing a new course will also be required to submit the Kent Core Information Form and sample syllabus. All proposals will be reviewed at the appropriate departmental/school and/or College levels before being submitted to the URCC and Educational Policies Council (EPC) for final approval.

The minimum requirement for approval of the assessment plan for a Kent Core course is that there is at least one Kent Core Learning Objective addressed in the course, with at least one appropriately defined learning outcome and its corresponding method of assessment and reporting. The academic unit must assure that the faculty members who teach the course have agreed to: the objective(s) to be addressed, complete an annual review and reporting of the assessment results to the URCC, and use the assessment and evaluation results to review the course and/or assessment plans. The process, as described above, is on the Faculty Senate's September 13, 2010 agenda.

### **Institution Involvement**

The initial proposal, changing the long-standing Liberal Educational Requirements (LERs) to the Kent Core (described in last year's annual report), involved a university-wide committee appointed by the provost (representing all areas of academic affairs). This committee brought together focus groups, conducted surveys, developed a website (<http://www.kent.edu/provost/innovativecurriculum-summit.cfm>), etc. to involve the university committee. This year's conversations involved Faculty Senators representing all colleges and campuses, the University Requirements Curriculum Committee (representatives from each college) and an ad-hoc subcommittee of the URCC. The proposed process and form (described above)



are based on several discussions of the ad-hoc subcommittee of the URCC and the URCC full membership. This process will be remanded to the Faculty Senate (September 13, 2010) for their approval.

Summer and academic year competitive grants were made available to faculty to develop and/or transform current LER courses into Kent Core courses. The summer grants (5 at \$3,000.00 each) were targeted at individual faculty whereas the academic year (Transformative Grants) (8 at \$15,000 each) were targeted towards departmental teams who were interested in making changes in current LER courses. Both of the grant groups acted as learning communities, sharing their ideas and experiences and receiving feedback from the other members. These efforts were shared with the University community during the annual Celebration of Teaching conference and through news stories in internal publications (eInside and The Daily Kent Stater).

### **Next Steps**

After approval, of the process, by Faculty Senate, an explanation of the process will be sent to all academic departments/schools and undergraduate curriculum committees via the department/school chairs/directors. The moratorium on new Kent Core courses will be lifted and all departments will have until fall 2013 to submit current Kent Core courses for approval by the URCC for continued inclusion in the Kent Core.

To assist faculty in developing learning outcomes for their Kent Core courses and choosing appropriate assessment tools, the Faculty Professional Development Center (fpdc) will be charged with developing a website and providing faculty workshops with resources specifically designed for the preparation of the Kent Core Course Outcomes Assessment Plan. The website and workshops would offer assistance with defining learning outcomes and identifying and developing appropriate measures of attainment, among other topics requested by the faculty. They would also offer examples of alternative approaches to outcomes assessment. A handbook will also be developed for faculty.

### **Resulting Effective Practices**

Grants were awarded to faculty to jumpstart the review and development process. The efforts of these groups spurred the conversations on campus about the Kent Core and learning outcomes. Some of the award recipients also used their newly designed courses as a pilot for the URCC to determine the process by which courses would be approved for Kent Core status.

### **Project Challenges**

There are over 120 courses currently approved for the LER (now Kent Core) program. The biggest challenge we face is the redesign and approval of these courses for inclusion in the fall 2011 undergraduate catalog. Along with the current courses that may wish to be approved for the Kent Core, the Kent Core now allows for interdisciplinary courses. These courses will need to be developed following the guidelines of the proposal and presented for approval. A funding model for the interdisciplinary courses needs to be developed. Kent State operates under a responsibility center management funding model. This model will present challenges as we develop a means to account for costs and profits from interdisciplinary courses. Ongoing faculty development is a challenge. The Faculty Professional

Development Center (fpdc) has a very small staff, so we are looking at “train the trainer” models in hopes this will relieve some of the pressure on the Center’s staff. Currently instructional videos on topics such as learning outcomes and assessment are being developed and posted on KSU Utube.

---

## **Update Review**

### **Project Accomplishments and Status**

The college is making reasonable progress in completion of this project by laying the groundwork for course and faculty development. Establishing, monitoring, and following up on outcomes and assessment data will also move the college forward in the development of a continuous quality improvement culture. The objectives and minimum requirements for approval of a course have been developed, so that with Faculty Senate approval, the college should be able to continue creating the core courses and educating faculty on the processes. In accordance with AQIP Category 1 Helping Students Learn, the college has integrated measures to determine the effect of the course changes on student learning and development.

### **Institution Involvement**

The institution's willingness to provide grant money as an incentive toward course development seems to have helped foster faculty involvement, enhancing the learning process for those involved. Acknowledging the group’s efforts can also provide incentive for these groups to continue to grow and learn from each other while developing courses. The college is to be commended for this support of faculty efforts.

### **Next Steps**

Change is always difficult to work through. The more faculty that can be supported through the processes, the easier the transition should be. The Faculty Professional Development Center sounds like a good way to provide this support.

### **Resulting Effective Practices**

It seems like the piloted courses were of value in the development of next steps toward the approval of future course submissions. You might consider using those faculty that received grants to be available as mentors, workshop presenters, or as contributors to the handbook. Their experiences in course development for Kent Core status could prove invaluable to other faculty that are struggling with their own course revisions.

### **Project Challenges**

The development of 120 courses in less than one year, in addition to educating and supporting faculty through the process changes, is definitely a challenge for the college's resources. The additional challenge of interdisciplinary course development suggests that there may be a need to develop more specific steps toward the achievement of this project. For example, commit the bulk of resources to faculty education on the processes for a certain amount of time and then focus efforts on course development when faculty are better prepared to begin work on course revision. The dedication to this action project is to be commended, as evidenced by the work already done within a year. The college seems able to meet the

challenges successfully.

---

<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Version 3: Kent Core Course Assessment II (Assessment Criteria)</b>
<b>Created</b>	AY 2009-2010
<b>Updated</b>	AY 2011-2012
<b>Reviewed</b>	10-12-2011
<b>Status</b>	Version 3: Completed; Most Recent Version: Active

---

## **Project Update**

### **Project Accomplishments and Status**

The University Requirements Curriculum Committee (URCC) completed its work in developing the criteria by which all **courses** wishing to be a part of the new Kent Core by Fall 2013 will be evaluated. The criteria was approved by the Faculty Senate in spring 2011 and distributed to all departments, schools, colleges and campuses. The submission forms with instructions was placed on the KSU Curriculum Services website and the Faculty Professional Development website. Department chairs and school directors were asked to hold a curriculum workday on August 23, 2011, to address this issue or work on other curriculum needs.

### **Institution Involvement**

This year's work was done predominantly by the members of the University Requirements Curriculum Committee (URCC). This committee's membership is made up of representatives (both faculty and administrators) from every college and regional campuses along with Faculty Senate appointees. A subcommittee of the URCC worked in conjunction with the Curriculum Task Force committee to develop criteria. Once approved by the URCC, the criteria was forwarded to the Educational Policies Council (EPC) for approval. After approval by EPC, it was forwarded to Faculty Senate. Faculty Senators were asked to share the documents with their constituents for feedback. Faculty Senators then discussed and voted on the criteria. Academic advisers were also included in the conversations in order to make them aware of the philosophy behind the programs and the criteria. The approved criteria was distributed to department chairs, school directors and campus deans to advance the approval process. These colleagues were asked to begin the conversations with faculty during a Curriculum Workday on August 23, 2011. The Faculty Professional Development Center developed resources to be posted online to help units develop appropriate student learning outcomes and assessment tools. These included videos and print resources. Center staff also conducted workshops for units as requested and provided university-wide workshops.

### **Next Steps**

All departments, schools and colleges need to submit course approval applications to the URCC for courses to be included in the Kent Core (Fall 2013 catalog) by November 2012. Simultaneously the URCC and the Advisory Committee on Academic Assessment will be working on developing a plan to assess the Kent Core as a program. Faculty Professional Development Center continues to develop and post resources and conduct workshops.

### **Resulting Effective Practices**

A new process for approval of Kent Core (general education) courses was developed

that requires units to designate specific learning outcomes and how they relate to the 11 learning outcomes defined for the Kent Core. Units must also show, during the approval process, how they are going to ensure consistency across multiple sections and how the learning outcomes will be assessed.

### **Project Challenges**

Tracking and assessing across sections will be a challenge that departments and the URCC faces.

---

## **Update Review**

### **Project Accomplishments and Status**

Kent State's Core Project represents the heart and soul of Category One! Your acknowledgement of the need to move from a teaching paradigm to a learning paradigm is central to Category One but is also mission-centered as well. It is also important to note that your action project has ties to Category Seven - Measuring Effectiveness and Category Eight - Planning for Continuous Improvement. Finally, you need to be applauded for establishing the criteria for the Core and communicating them to key internal stakeholders. This will likely be the foundation for implementing this project. The institution is making reasonable progress towards completion of the Action Project.

### **Institution Involvement**

You have made it evident that you value broad and comprehensive communication and involvement with the Kent State Core Project. Your internal structure is massive but you have used every avenue to ensure widespread involvement in the project. The hallmarks of a high performing institution include Collaboration, Involvement, Learning, and Information. You are modeling those standards with this project. Your efforts are commendable!

### **Next Steps**

Your "Next Steps" reflect a commitment to "doing the right things" in the areas of communication and involvement. You need to be applauded for connecting faculty professional development to the desired outcome of moving to a learning paradigm. Your project cannot be done with a "quick fix" approach. Your faculty are engaged in redesign and it requires a methodical process. Hat's off to you for recognizing that and for moving steadily towards implementation. Finally, a key component of continuous quality improvement is assessment/evaluation. It is a central feature of your "Next Steps". Congratulations!

### **Resulting Effective Practices**

Outstanding work in integrating student learning outcomes from the course to program level! Your recognition of the need to ensure the consistency of learning outcomes across multiple course sections is insightful and a lesson in developing an assessment plan that needs to be shared with your peers. Your efforts again reinforce this action project's links to Category One, Seven, and Eight (see Response to one above).

### **Project Challenges**

You have accurately identified a key challenge in your bold move to shift the focus of teaching and learning at Kent State. The HLC web site has resources on assessment that could be helpful here: <http://www.hlcommission.org/information-forinstitutions/resources-for-institutions.html>. Your strategic efforts to involve the college community in this action project should produce assessment strategies that would address this challenge.

---

<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Version 4: Kent Core Course Assessment III (Application)</b>
<b>Created</b>	AY 2009-2010
<b>Updated</b>	AY 2012-2013
<b>Reviewed</b>	10-1-2012
<b>Status</b>	Version 4: Completed; Most Recent Version: Active

---

## **Project Update**

### **Project Accomplishments**

During AY11-12, the University Requirements Curriculum Committee (URCC) developed the application form that units must submit in order to have a course approved for Kent Core status. In the application, units must address which of the Kent Core student learning outcomes are being addressed in the course, how the outcome are being assessed and how the issues of consistency across sections and campuses is being managed. The application was discussed and approved by Faculty Senate during the fall semester. The application was distributed to departments/schools/campuses and deadlines set for submission. Approximately 20 courses had been approved for Kent Core designation by the end of the academic year. Academic units need to submit applications during AY12-13 in order for the courses to be designated in the 2013 undergraduate catalog. Also during this year, the URCC will be working on an assessment plan for the Kent Core.

### **Institution Involvement**

All faculty in units that have undergraduate programs (associates and bachelors), were given opportunities through their departments' curriculum committees to engage in the discussion regarding course submission for Kent Core status. Faculty who teach particular courses that were until recently designated LER (e.g. Introduction to Psychology, Seven Ideas that Shook the Universe, etc), came together to discuss common student learning outcomes and assessment techniques. The proposal then made its way through the faculty governance process - college curriculum committee, University Requirements Curriculum Committee, Educational Policies Council and Faculty Senate.

### **Next Steps**

During AY12-13, units that wish to have courses approved as Kent Core courses and included in the 2013 undergraduate catalog, must submit their application to the URCC by November 2012. Units have been notified of this deadline.

The URCC will be developing an assessment plan to be presented to the Faculty Senate for approval. This assessment plan will aim to exam the program as a w hole. Currently the assessment plans for each course are part of the application process.

### **Resulting Effective Practices**

Bringing together the faculty who teach the courses was very beneficial. These faculty included not only those who teach sections at the Kent campus but at the other seven regional campuses. Nontenure track and adjunct faculty were also included in the conversations. These conversations provided opportunities for faculty

to share what was successful in their courses, determine what the primary learning outcomes in these courses should be and how these outcomes should be assessed.

### **Project Challenges**

Developing a meaningful assessment plan for the Kent Core will be difficult. Even though the designation "Kent Core" might lead one to think there are certain courses students must take to meet the "core" this is not the case. The Kent Core is made up of 6 categories from which students must take 6-9 hours. In the previous general education program 109 courses were given the LER designation.

---

## **Update Review**

### **Project Accomplishments and Status**

Clearly, Kent State University has taken on a massive project with the revision of the core Liberal Education component. In spite of the scale, it appears that this project team has managed to stay focused on the goal of creating a core of courses that reflect the new philosophy for undergraduate education at KSU. The process for proposing and reviewing courses for inclusion has been developed, with twenty courses having now been approved, clearly showing significant progress on this Action Project. It seems obvious that a good bit of collaboration has taken place among the project team members and various faculty members who have already demonstrated involvement.

The original proposal indicated that the assessment plan was to be developed during AY10-11 but there is no mention of progress on that in this update or in the one from the previous year, unless I overlooked it. Has work begun and progressed on that assessment plan or is it just now beginning two years afterwards?

### **Institution Involvement**

The university seems to have done a super job of including all faculty members, at least representatively, in the project. Of course, the degree to which that effectively occurred is dependent on communication processes that are not described. I would like to have clarification on whether or not the "common student learning outcomes" mentioned here are those designated in the university's new philosophy or if this refers to CLO's developed within particular courses, departments or programs. It would also be helpful to note more specific and/or concrete aspects of faculty involvement. Does engaging "in the discussion" mean that they participated in shaping the process or were simply made aware of it and had the opportunity to comment?

There is no mention here, in the previous annual update or in the proposal of the involvement of students, transfer institutions, employers and other external stakeholders in the developing the CLO's or whether or not they will be involved in developing the assessment processes for the new LER.

### **Next Steps**

I appreciate that this makes it clear that there are two aspects of assessment involved here and I wonder if it might be worthwhile to include a third aspect: departmental and/or program level assessment. I think it would be useful to identify specific



groups/stakeholders and how they might be involved in developing and validating the assessment process.

I am assuming, but do not know, that the submission process will remain “open” permanently and that instructors/departments may continue proposing courses for designation as LER. The original Action Project description includes the notation that the “current LER Core Program had grown over the years with little oversight.” Has the university developed a process for monitoring the new LER Core process to assure that in ten or twenty years there will not have been a “proliferation of courses” to the extent that once again “a coherent program” will no longer exist?

### **Resulting Effective Practices**

It appears that the university’s inclusion of faculty from all locations and types of contract benefitted the participants, the university and the students, in ways that extended beyond simply proposing courses for the LER Core. Good action projects do that; they stimulate unintended but beneficial results. By focusing on involvement and collaboration, you have gained even more than was originally proposed.

### **Project Challenges**

This particular aspect of the update is intended to stimulate deliberate focus and planning as you continue your Action Project. Simply stating that it “will be difficult” doesn’t engage in the productive planning and forethought that would result from identifying specific challenges and proposing ways of meeting those challenges. Noting that the process previously led to a proliferation of courses doesn’t address how you might attempt to keep from repeating that experience or eventual result. By focusing on the Common Learning Outcomes, the issue of proliferation should become moot. Does it matter if you end up with 150 courses so long as taking the designated hours from the designated areas results in all students mastering all of the CLO’s? Couldn’t your overall assessment plan be a key in addressing the effectiveness of the Core?

By identifying specific challenges now, while recognizing that there may be some unanticipated ones, you can help stack the deck in your favor, so to speak, by developing strategies that will help meet those challenges successfully.

The institution is making reasonable progress toward completion of the project and development of an institution-wide continuous quality improvement culture.

---

<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Version 5: Assessing the Kent Core (Phase One)</b>
<b>Created</b>	AY 2009-2010
<b>Updated</b>	AY 2013-2014
<b>Reviewed</b>	10-13-2013
<b>Status</b>	Version 5: Completed; Most Recent Version: Active

---

## **Project Update**

### **Project Accomplishments**

In the last update for this Action Project, a next step for the 2012-2013 academic year was to have courses approved as Kent Core courses to submit learning outcomes and methods of assessment to the Education Policy Committee (EPC) as a part of the approval process. In January 2013, all of the Kent Core course learning outcomes and assessment plans were submitted and approved by the University Requirements Curriculum Committee (URCC) and the Associate Provost's Office of Quality Initiatives and Curriculum. During February 2013, the Kent Core subcommittee analyzed the collected data to ascertain the most used learning objectives in the individual course learning outcome assessment plans of approved Kent Core courses. This was also viewed as a way to determine a method of assessment for the courses in aggregate. During the analysis, the subcommittee had difficulty in deciding an assessment approach to assess the Kent Core as a whole. The group decided to seek guidance regarding next steps from the Provost Office. However, the data analyzed by the Kent Core Subcommittee from the Kent Core learning assessment plans did exhibit that three Kent Core learning objectives were used more commonly. The top three most used learning objectives were: a) discipline concepts, meaning understanding basic concepts of the academic discipline, which was associated with 28 Kent core courses; b) critical thinking, meaning acquiring critical thinking and problem solving skills, which was associated with 26 Kent core courses; and c) diversity, meaning improving their understanding of issues and behaviors concerning inclusion, community, and tolerance, which was associated with 18 Kent core courses.

### **Institution Involvement**

In May 2012, the URCC was charged by the EPC and Associate Provost of Quality Initiatives and Curriculum to develop an assessment plan for the Kent Core learning objectives as a whole. In Fall 2012, the Kent Core Subcommittee, a subcommittee of URCC, was deemed the group to develop the Kent Core Assessment plan. The URCC (<http://www.kent.edu/urcc/about.cfm>) is a subcommittee of the EPC (<http://www.kent.edu/provost/curriculum/epc/index.cfm>) that oversees all courses that every student must take (i.e., university-wide curricular requirements). The URCC is charged to do the following: a) periodically review and recommend changes in existing curricular requirements, b) review new courses and program proposals and make recommendations on them, c) initiate and monitor faculty development programs for instruction of these courses, and d) assess student learning outcomes from university-wide required courses and programs. The URCC is composed of 23 members representing faculty and administrators from various colleges, schools, and the University library.

The EPC is a Faculty Senate body responsible for long-range academic planning for Kent State University. The council is co-chaired by the provost and the chair of the Faculty Senate. The EPC comprises two councils: an Undergraduate council and a Graduate council. The EPC has oversight for curriculum issues, programs and policy proposals, library policies, and facilities. Moreover, the work of both groups was instrumental in maintaining an on-going focus and dialogue centered on the Kent Core assessment.

### **Next Steps**

The URCC subcommittee examined a number of different assessment techniques, measures and approaches that could be used to assess the Kent Core. From the subcommittee's work, the following recommendations have been made:

- Kent State's Provost Office, including the Office of the Assistant Provost for Accreditation, Assessment and Learning (formerly Quality Initiatives and Curriculum), along with the Office of Research, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness (RPIE), continue to work with the Kent Core Subcommittee to complete the necessary assessments of university level data. The purpose of this collaborative work will be to collect valid data required for assessments such as the Higher Learning Commission, and AQIP. This will also allow for uniformity of data collection, as well as serve as a central repository for data that would be easily accessible to university administration, faculty, and staff, as needed. Additionally, the collaborative group will continue to present assessment findings to university committees so that curricular decisions made by faculty are also based on updated assessment data.
- To facilitate cost effectiveness for the university, collaboration could also be made with the Research Bureau in the College of Education Health and Human Services to aid in the creation of assessment tools.
- An Implementation Team should be created to develop valid assessment measures for the Kent Core. This team could potentially include staff from the Office of the Assistant Provost for Accreditation, Assessment and Learning, RPIE, researchers from the Research Bureau, and university faculty members with experience and/or training in academic assessment. Faculty Senate, EPC or other faculty groups may be useful in determining and selecting faculty representatives to serve on the implementation team. The overall management and coordination of the Kent Core aggregate assessment should be directed by the Assistant Provost for Accreditation, Assessment and Learning along with a faculty co-chair.
- The assessment of the effectiveness of the Kent Core should occur electronically and not linked to particular courses or sections and should be an assessment completed at the student level. This type of assessment will reduce the burden of faculty teaching Kent Core courses and will also not be construed as an assessment of particular courses or instructors by "singling out" sections.

Regarding the aforementioned recommendations by the Kent Core Subcommittee, the URCC voted to approve these recommendations and move the recommendations forward as URCC recommendations to EPC and Faculty Senate. The Kent Core Subcommittee believes that these recommendations provide the best opportunity to assess the Kent Core. As described in the recommendations above, there is more work associated with this action project that needs to be completed. The Provost Office is committed to continue working along with the various faculty committees and representatives to satisfy this action project.

### **Resulting Effective Practices**

Some valuable reflections for other post-secondary institutions undergoing similar initiatives to consider in the development of an general education assessment include: 1) Using an assessment measure or technique that has previously been validated or can be validated as a mechanism of measurement for the learning objective assessed; 2) Aim to limit the burden placed on the instructors of courses assessed; and 3) Using assessments that meet the diversity of course curriculum and course type (i.e., basic science, humanities, fine arts). Additionally, coordinating the assessment activity via faculty and staff/administrative committees and subcommittees provided a collaborative assessment approach that also may be useful at other institutions. Faculty who teach at all Kent Campuses, including tenure track, non-tenure track and adjunct faculty, along with administrators from varied areas university-wide, comprised of the committees involved with this action project.

### **Project Challenges**

From meeting discussions and research conducted by the Kent Core subcommittee it was concluded that the Kent Core learning outcome related to discipline concepts would be difficult to assess at this time with the number of very different individual course assessments being used, the breadth of knowledge concepts across and within Kent Core courses, and the intensive work/time/cost that would be required to adequately assess this learning outcome.

Therefore, it was recommended by the Kent Core Subcommittee to seek guidance from Faculty Senate and the Provost Office regarding next steps in assessing the Kent Core in aggregate. While that is being determined in the 2013-2014 academic year, the subcommittee will begin the Kent Core assessment with two of the currently most used Kent Core learning outcomes. The two learning outcomes most faculty noted they satisfy include: a) acquired critical thinking and problem solving skills, and b) improving students understanding of issues and behaviors concerning inclusion, community and tolerance.

Consideration by both the Provost's Assessment Office and the URCC subcommittee regarding the use and dissemination of the information collected from the Kent Core Assessment should occur and include the following: 1) the other learning objectives that are not assessed should be revisited because of the methods used to secure assessment data of individual Kent Core Courses (i.e., each Kent Core course only had to choose one learning objective to assess) may not be the best factor in determining the use of the Kent Core learning outcomes because learning outcomes may have been chosen on ease of assessment and not use in the courses, and 2) after the data are collected and disseminated, Faculty Senate, EPC, and the URCC will work with the Provost Office regarding next steps based off analysis of all data collected.

---

## **Update Review**

### **Project Accomplishments and Status**

It is excellent that critical thinking and diversity are among the most used objectives. It is difficult to figure out how to assess an objective across a variety of disciplines

and courses, but it is important to have a continuous assessment plan in place with a method of assessment identified. There are curriculum assessment and mapping programs available on the market that can help with the structure and implementation of an assessment plan and that can be used to gather necessary data for analysis and reporting - WeaveOnline, e-Valu, iWebPortfolio, just to mention a few.

### **Institution Involvement**

It is important that the faculty be involved in the core curriculum. It appears that you have a good mix of faculty and administrators, as well as involvement from the faculty senate to accomplish your goals.

### **Next Steps**

Again, I would highly recommend finding an assessment program to help with ongoing assessment. I mentioned a few companies above. These programs help identify which student assessments map to course objectives that map to core objectives. This plan looks appropriate but the amount of data will be overwhelming without using a database of some sort.

### **Resulting Effective Practices**

These effective practices are generalizable to many campuses the size of Kent State University. It is encouraging to see that all types of instructional faculty have been included in this process.

### **Project Challenges**

This is a large, complex project to accomplish. All of the parties that should be involved are in a collaborative process. Other than the strong recommendation to find a database/mapping program to help with the assessment process, data gathering and reporting, the next steps are in line with the goal of this action project.

---

<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Version 6: Assessing the Kent Core (Phase Two)</b>
<b>Created</b>	AY 2009-2010
<b>Updated</b>	NA
<b>Reviewed</b>	NA
<b>Status</b>	Active

---

### **Project Goal**

This action project is a continuation of a previous action project and represents the next phase of Assessing the Kent Core, our university's general education curriculum. The goal of this project is to use the submitted individual course assessment to evaluate each Kent Core course. These evaluations will be the basis of improving each of our Kent Core courses and will lead to our assessment of how the Kent Core curriculum is addressing the general education goals and learning outcomes described by the university.

### **Reason for Undertaking this Project**

The Kent Core is a series of courses and options that defines the general education requirements for all students at Kent State University. The Kent Core is also related to the State of Ohio's transfer module of courses that are expected options for students at all of the state's colleges and universities. As such, an assessment of learning outcomes and success of the program in meeting our goals for students is at the heart of what the university does. During the 2012-12 academic year, the departments, schools, and colleges developed learning outcomes and assessment plans for each course within the Kent Core. By January 2013, all Kent Core course learning outcomes and assessment plans had been submitted, evaluated, and approved by the University Requirements Curriculum (URCC), the Educational Policies Council (EPC), and the Office of the Provost. In the second phase, the plan involves implementation of the evaluation and assessment of each of the Kent Core courses over a two-year period. Once the Kent Core goals have been assessed within courses, the results will be evaluated to better understand how our curriculum promotes goals of a liberal education.

### **Organizational Areas Affected**

The areas most impacted by this project are the academic affairs divisions including faculty who teach Kent Core classes; department, school and college curriculum committees; and the University-wide URCC and EPC. Information on the implementation of the Kent Core assessment is communicated to the Advisory Council of Academic Assessment which meets on a regular basis throughout the year.

### **Key Organizational Processes**

The key organizational processes this action project will improve include: better alignment of general education learning outcomes and assessment (*Helping Students Learn*) and enhancing the interpretation and utilization of collected student learning assessment data by faculty to promote or enrich learning (*Measuring Effectiveness*).

### **Project Timeframe Rationale**

The expected time frame for the second phase of this project is two years (Fall 2013-

Fall 2015). During the 2013-2014 academic year, individual courses are being assessed following the plans that were developed and approved in 2012-2013. Our preliminary tests of the assessment instruments during the Summer of 2013 led us to improve upon our testing. We have spent a large amount of time developing and validating our tests. Assessment instruments in all Kent Core classes offered in the Fall semester of 2013 have produced interesting data that are the basis for refining our assessment tools during the Spring semester of 2014. An overall two-year time frame was decided upon because not all Kent Core classes are offered every semester. At the end of the 2014-2015 academic year, we will have multiple assessments for each of our Kent Core classes providing sufficient data for an overall assessment of the Kent Core program (to be conducted Fall 2015).

### **Project Success Monitoring**

The EPC is a faculty senate body responsible for long-range academic planning for Kent State University. The council is co-chaired by the provost and the chair of faculty senate. The EPC charged URCC, a subcommittee of EPC, to develop an assessment plan for the Kent Core as a whole during the 2012-2013 academic year. The URCC, which meets monthly throughout the year, reviews the progress on their assessment activities and provides updates to the EPC as appropriate. Additionally, the chair of URCC also serves on the Advisory Council for Academic Assessment (ACAA), which is co-chaired by the Assistant Provost for Accreditation, Assessment and Learning. During monthly ACAA meetings, the chair of URCC provides updates regarding the status and progress of this action project.

### **Project Outcome Measures**

Every general education course at the university will be systematically assessed for student mastery of the General Education goals of the university. Data from the course assessment will be analyzed to determine if students are mastering the general education goals, and to evaluate how our courses can better succeed in helping students learn.