

Report on the University Core Curriculum Survey

The Faculty Senate Executive Committee has charged the Faculty Rights, Privileges and Responsibilities Committee (FRPR) with conducting a “survey to assess present faculty response to the Core Curriculum and its implementation” for a second year.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The survey distributed by the Faculty Rights, Privileges and Responsibilities Committee (FRPR) in the Spring semester of 2016 to assess the faculty response to the Core Curriculum and its implementation resulted in insightful and useful results for the University Core Curriculum Committee, Faculty Governance, and University Administration. This was the second year FRPR was charged with distributing a survey to the Lawrence Campus faculty regarding the Core Curriculum. The survey instrument used in the second year remained mostly intact from the previous year, with a few minor wording adjustments, additional questions about assessment, and a reduced number of open-ended responses.

The overall response rate was 16%¹ (compared with 14% in 2015). Representation is unknown since departmental affiliation and status were not required to be reported by respondents. 61 respondents indicated their school affiliation:

CLAS	64%
Engineering	10%
School of the Arts	8%
Architecture	5%
Journalism	5%
Education	5%
Pharmacy	2%
Business	2%

Even though not every respondent indicated their School affiliation, through the optional question, and indicators throughout the comment sections, the humanities are over-represented. This would also most likely include Area Studies and some social sciences. Estimating from the low response rate on the optional affiliation question, and the comment sections, the STEM fields were underrepresented in this survey.

Course Selection and Approval Process

- **2016:** 55% are not satisfied with course selection process (57% in 2015)
- **2016:** Major themes from comments:
 - Inefficient process
 - Lack of feedback from UCCC and the other level of reviews
 - Perception of bias
 - Allows students more academic options
 - Improving course assessment
- **2015:** Major themes from comments:
 - Lack of feedback and timeliness from the UCCC
 - Lack of faculty involvement in the overall process
 - Unclear requirements for course inclusion
 - Perceptions of “departmental favoritism”

Course Restructuring

- **2016:** 70% did not have to restructure courses to meet Core requirements

¹ Based on Faculty Rank, Fall 2015 (Librarians and Administrators were excluded because they do not have instructional duties.)

2015: 63% did not have to restructure courses

- Major themes from 2016 comments:
 - Development of assessment tools/metrics (both positive and negative comments)
 - Changes in syllabi
 - Additional assignments
 - Changes in learning outcomes

Impact on Course Enrollment & Credit Hours

- Majority indicated there was no impact

Impact on Student Assessment

- Major themes from comments:
 - Neutral and/or did not understand connection with Core Curriculum
 - Inconsistency within departments

- Professional accreditation meets all assessment needs
- Faculty resistance

RECOMMENDATIONS

- *Course Selection Process*
 - Simplify and/or clarify
 - Give more feedback
 - Decrease time from submission to decision
 - Develop and implement plan that decreases the perception of bias in the selection process to increase faculty support
- *Assessment*
 - Clarify any assessment requirements and flexible enough for each discipline
 - Ensure that all assessment support is visible and available

SURVEY ANALYSIS

METHODS

- Survey developed by FRPR in March 2016
- Distributed by FRPR via the KU Lawrence Faculty email distribution list
- Available for response April 3-14th 2016
- Only members of FRPR had access to the raw data

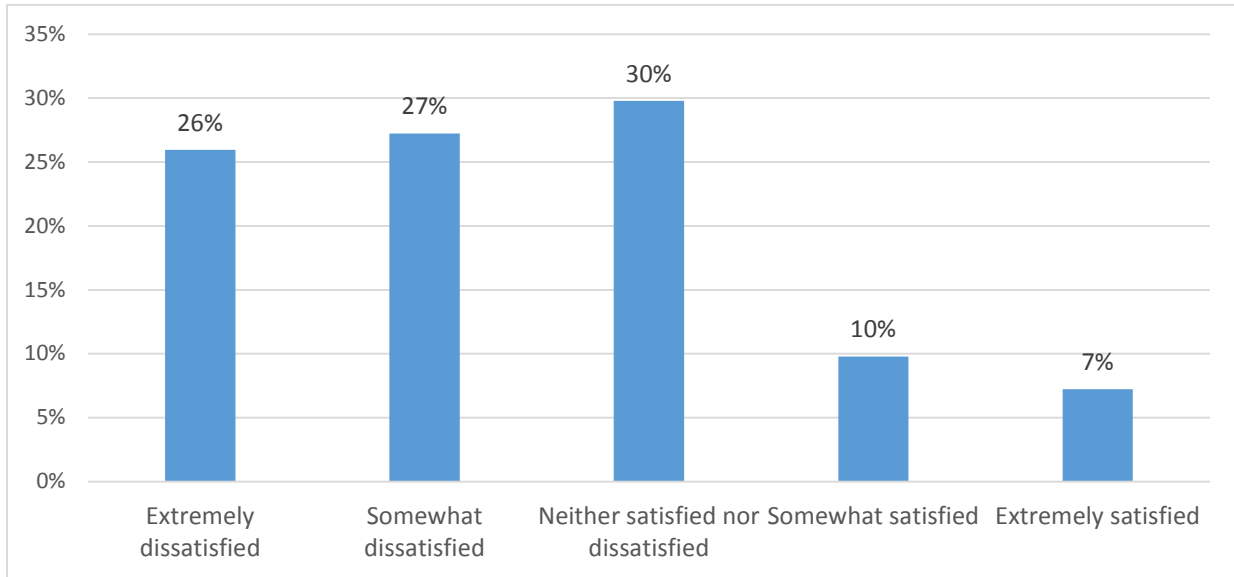
RESULTS

- 245 completed surveys, which is a 16% response rate from the Lawrence campus faculty
- Three major topic included in the survey:
 - Course selection and approval
 - Course enrollment and student credit hours
 - Student assessment
- Additional analysis of optional final comments section at the end of the survey

Course Selection/Approval Process

Survey Question:

Are you satisfied with the way courses are selected for inclusion in the Core Curriculum?



(Total responses: 235)

- Slightly more than half of the respondents are at least somewhat dissatisfied with the course selection process
- One-third of respondents did not have opinion on the process
- Only 17% of the respondents are at least somewhat satisfied with the course selection process.

Open Ended Responses (115 responses):

- 89% of responses were negative
- 6% of response were positive
- 5% of responses were neutral or not applicable

Major Themes:

- Negative Themes
 - Inefficiency
 - The amount of time the process takes. A difference from the 2015 survey, is the discussion of the different levels of review. For some, this has made the process even more time consuming and confusing. One respondent commented:

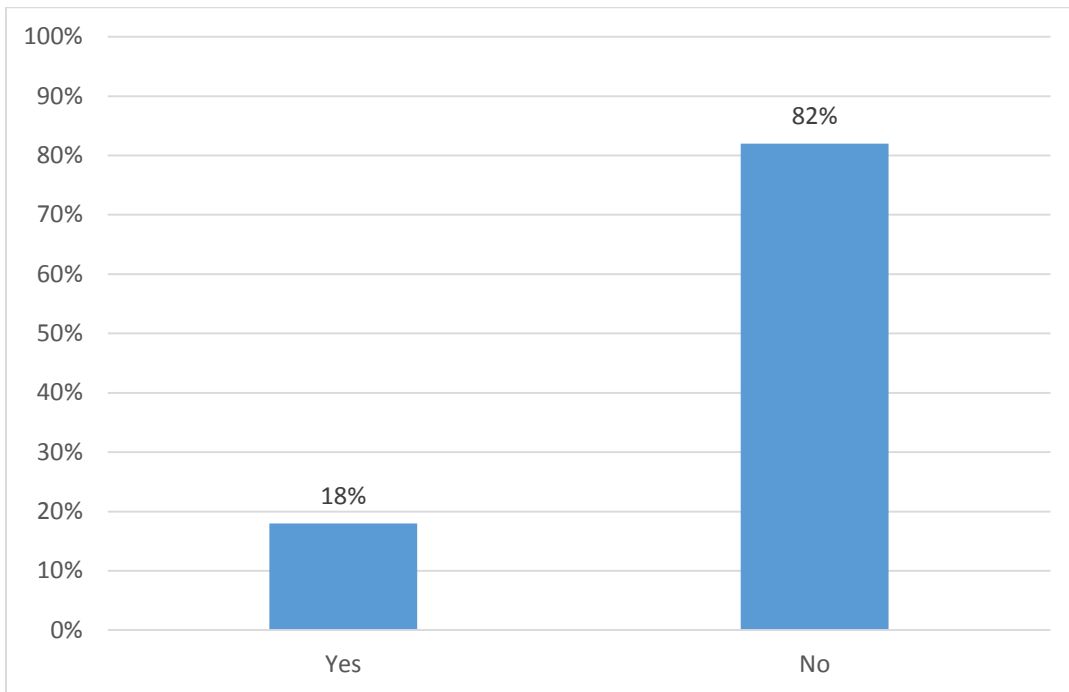
The application process is cumbersome: faculty originally were able to submit courses themselves, now they have to do that through department administrators.

Why is CUSA reviewing core applications? That further slows down the process. Currently it takes months for a course to be approved and feedback is minimal.

- Lack of consistency
 - Many respondents feel that course selection, and how the criteria is applied, is inconsistent. One example of this sentiment:
Inclusion/exclusion seems, at times, arbitrary and without a fundamental metric for making decisions
- Political and biased process
- Lack of transparency
- Lack of feedback
- Positive Themes
 - Allows students more academic options
 - Improving course assessment

Survey Question:

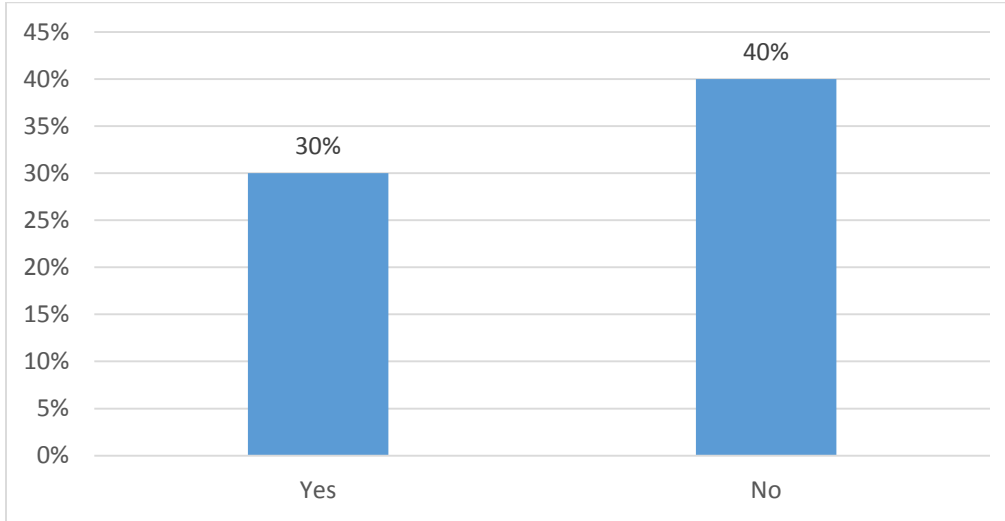
Did you submit any course for approval in the Core Curriculum that was rejected?



(Total responses: 234)

Survey Question:

With your rejected course, were you encouraged, or required, to change your course so that it could be included?



(Total responses: 43)

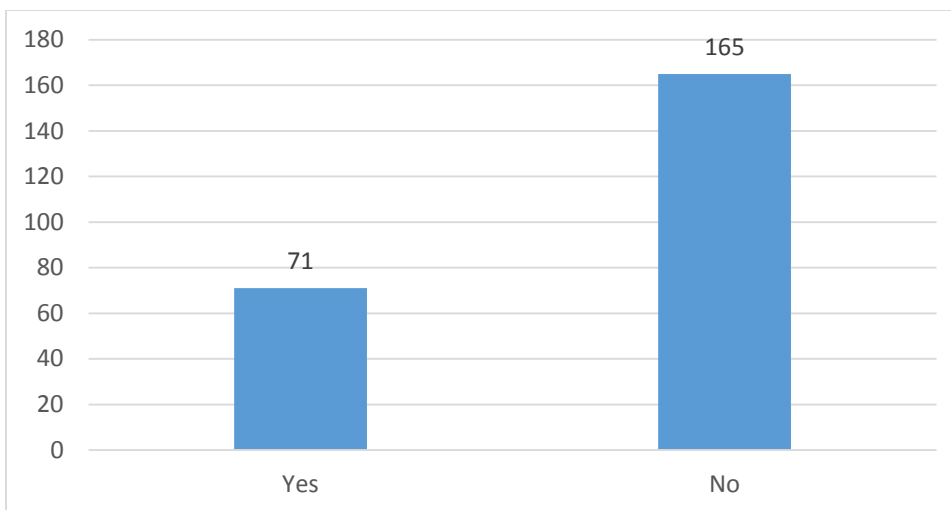
Open Ended Responses (13 responses):

Major Themes:

- No feedback after rejection
- Committee did not understand the discipline under review
- Approved after submitting additional materials

Survey Question:

Have you had to restructure any of your courses to meet the requirements of the Core Curriculum?



Open Ended Responses (58 responses):

- 47% negative
- 38% neutral
- 16% positive

Major Themes:

- Development of assessment tools/metrics (both positive and negative comments)
- Changes in syllabi
- Additional assignments
- Changes in learning outcomes

Has one of your courses approved for the core curriculum been withdrawn in the absence of a request from you?

Answer	Response
Yes	3
No	225

Please select the reason for removing the course from the Core:

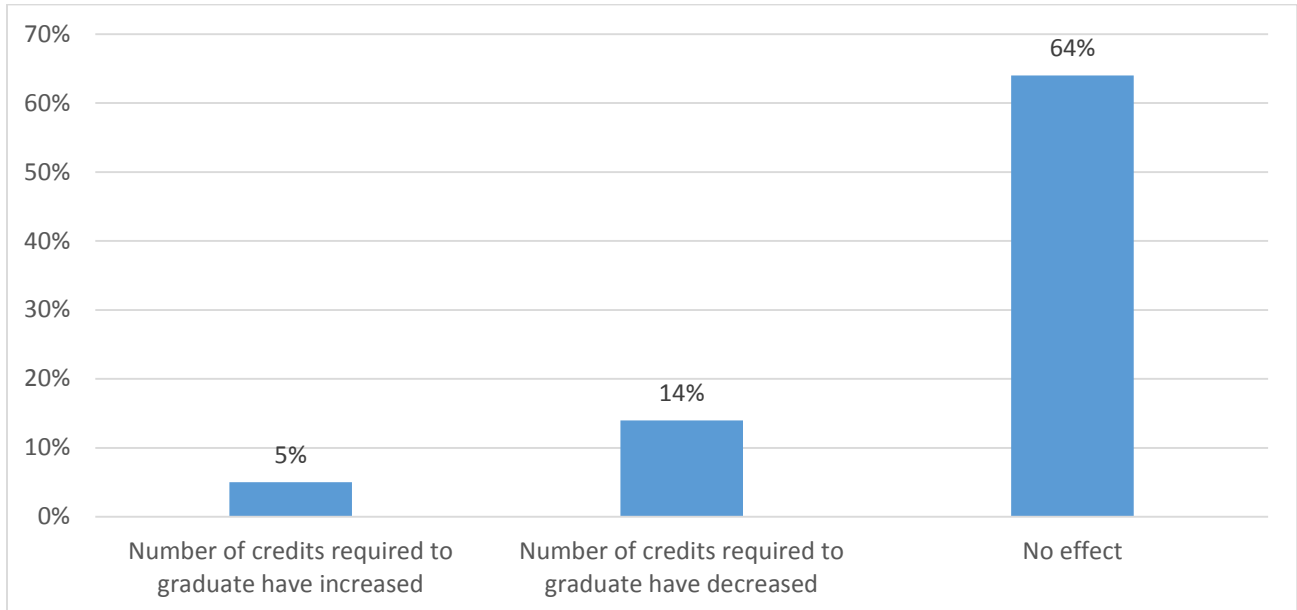
Answer	Response
UCCC determined course assessment no longer met stated objectives	0
Unit/School requested course no longer be considered for meeting core curriculum requirements	0
Administration requested course no longer be considered for meeting core curriculum requirements	1
Other:	2

Other:
We were never told, despite many requests. Apparently the decision was made at the level of CUSA, but beyond that we have no information.
It just wasn't showing up [on] the list anymore. Unsure why.

Course Enrollment and Credit Hours

Survey Question:

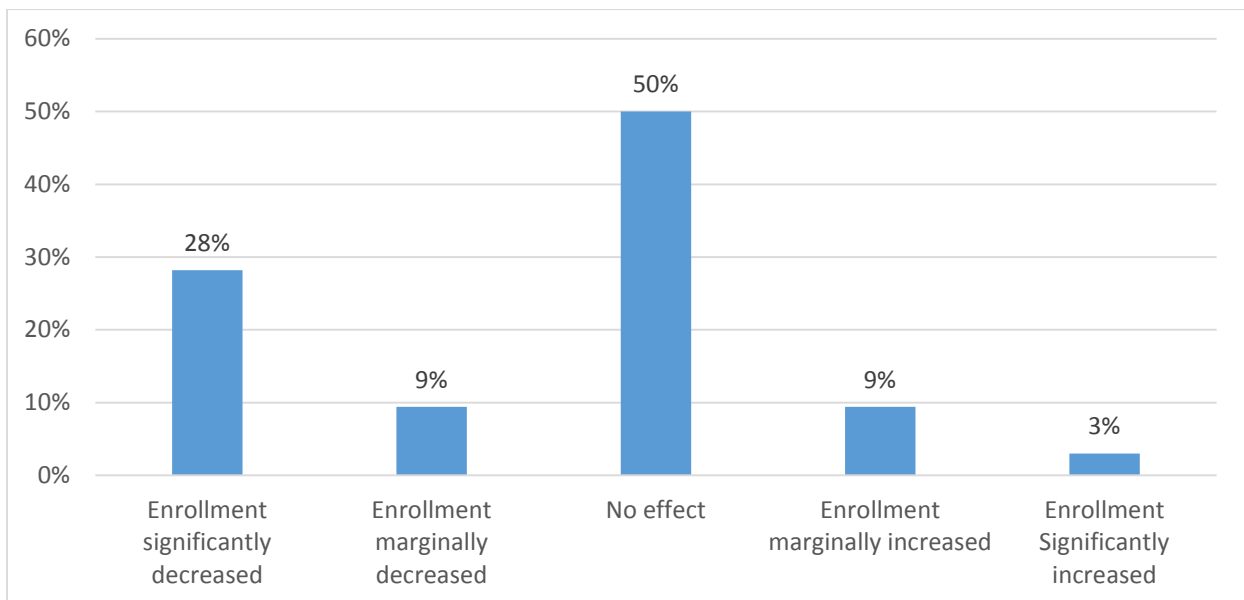
Has the implementation of the Core Curriculum had an effect on the number of credits required for students to graduate in your curriculum?



(Total responses: 222)

Survey Question:

Has the implementation of the Core Curriculum had an effect on enrollment in any of your courses?



(Total Responses: 224)

Open Ended Responses (35 responses):

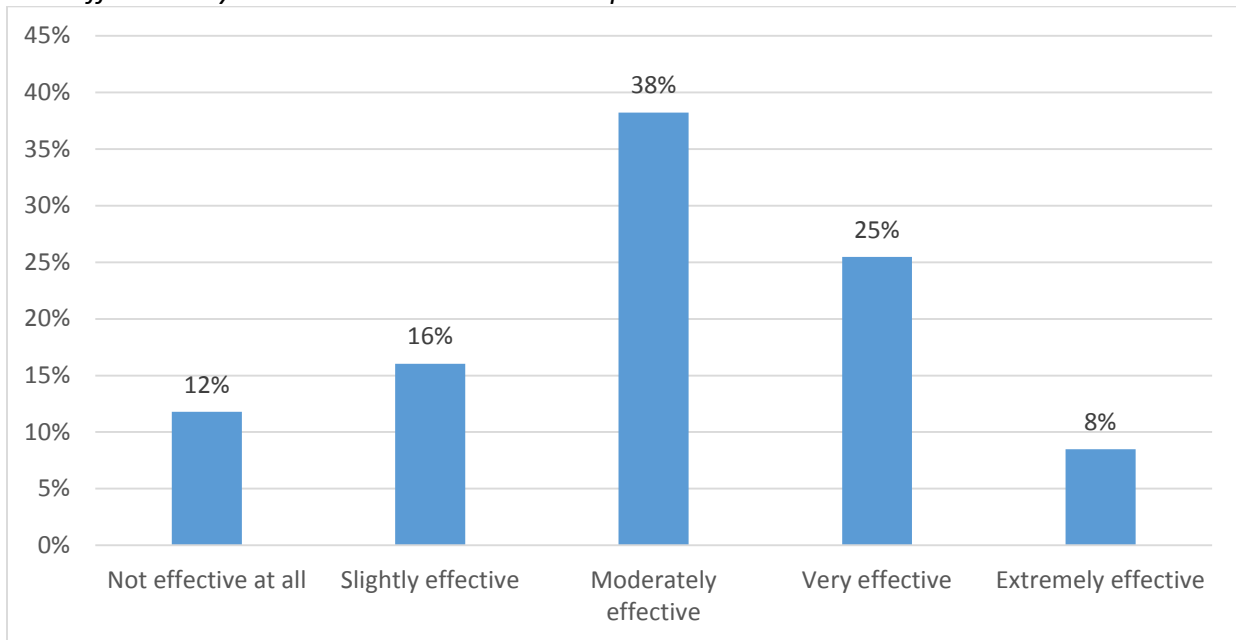
Major Theme:

- The majority of respondents indicated they do not have enough information to answer questions related to credit hours and enrollment.

Student Assessment

Survey Question:

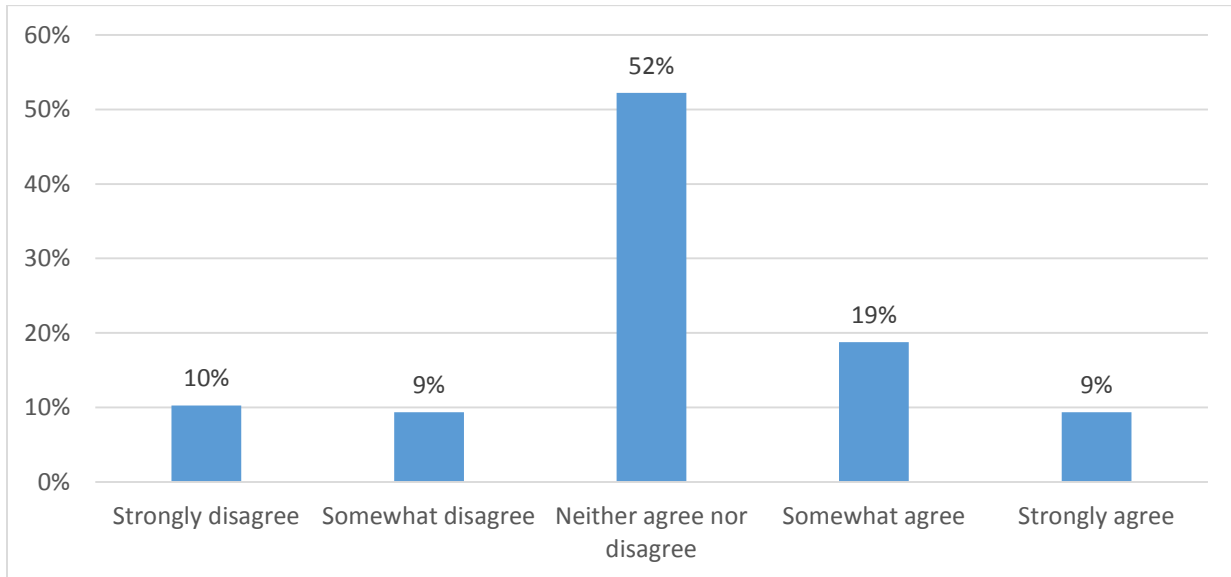
How effective is your unit's course assessment process?



(Total responses: 224)

Survey Question:

Do you think the Core Curriculum has impacted your ability to assess students in the manner you think is appropriate?



(224 respondents)

Open Ended Responses (67):

Major Themes:

- As evident from 52% of the neutral responses, the following example comments demonstrate confusion of the survey question and/ or connection with Core Curriculum assessment:
 - “not even sure assessment exists?”;
 - I'm not sure what this question means
 - I don't know what it is.
- Inconsistency within departments
- Professional accreditation assessment standards exceed any university requirements
- Faculty resistance
- Core Curriculum has improved assessment efforts
- Unclear standards from the University

Survey Question:

Do you think instructors have received sufficient resources from the University to meet the requirements of the Core?

Answer	
Yes	43%
No	57%

Open Ended Responses (10 responses)

Major Themes:

- Not aware of services (i.e. CTE)
- CTE is very helpful
- Lack of funding Instructors should not *“need additional resources beyond attendance at one of the ongoing workshops on assessment. This is a matter of motivation and will, not skill or even time.”*

Optional Comments

(Total 69 responses):

- Negative: 85%
- Positive: 9%
- Neutral/not applicable: 6%

Major Themes

- Positive themes:
 - Course Inventory Management System has helped
 - Streamlining the entire process is a necessity
 - The Core has made KU more competitive
 - Some commented how the Core gives the students more options
 - Increasing graduation rates
 - Negative themes:
 - Concerns about transferring courses (if they meet the Core requirements)
 - Many comments about the Core reducing the quality of education because of the perception of the deemphasizing of the humanities, and traditional liberal arts education in general
 - Assessment too time consuming and results will not be used
 - Implementation was too fast
 - Biased process (political)

Submitted by the Faculty, Rights, Privileges and Responsibilities Committee 4/29/16

APPENDIX: SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Core Curriculum Survey: Year 2

The Faculty Senate Executive Committee has charged the Faculty Rights, Privileges and Responsibilities Committee (FRPR) with conducting a “survey to assess present faculty response to the Core Curriculum and its implementation” for a second year. On behalf of the committee members, we are requesting your evaluation of the Core Curriculum and its implementation.

Your name and department is optional. You will never be personally associated with your survey responses.

The survey will take about 5-10 minutes to complete

Course Selection

	Extremely dissatisfied (23)	Somewhat dissatisfied (24)	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (25)	Somewhat satisfied (26)	Extremely satisfied (27)
Are you satisfied with the way courses are selected for inclusion in the Core Curriculum? (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please write any additional comments about your satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the way courses are selected for inclusion in the Core Curriculum:

Did you submit any course for approval in the Core Curriculum that was rejected?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Answer If Did you submit any course for approval in the Core Curriculum that was rejected? Yes Is Selected

With your rejected course, were you encouraged, or required, to change your course so that it could be included?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Additional Comments: (3) _____

Have you had to restructure any of your courses to meet the requirements of the Core Curriculum?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Answer If Have you had to restructure any of your courses to meet the requirements of the Core Curriculum? Yes Is Selected

If you had to restructure a course, please describe your experience with course restructuring, for example, what kind of changes were made and how, if at all, did these alter your classroom options?

Has one of your courses approved for the core curriculum been withdrawn in the absence of a request from you?

- Yes (4)
- No (5)

Answer If Has one of your courses approved for the core curriculum been withdrawn in the absence of a request from you? Yes Is Selected

Please select the reason for removing the course from the Core:

- UCCC determined course assessment no longer met stated objectives (1)
- Unit/School requested course no longer be considered for meeting core curriculum requirements (2)
- Administration requested course no longer be considered for meeting core curriculum requirements (3)
- Other: (4) _____

Has the implementation of the Core Curriculum had an effect on the number of credits required for students to graduate in your curriculum?

- Number of credits required to graduate have increased (1)
- Number of credits required to graduate have decreased (2)
- No effect (3)
- Additional comments: (4) _____

Impact on Enrollment

	Enrollment significantly decreased (1)	Enrollment marginally decreased (2)	No effect (3)	Enrollment marginally increased (4)	Enrollment Significantly increased (5)
Has the implementation of the Core Curriculum had an effect on enrollment in any of your courses? (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Impact on Student Assessment

	Strongly disagree (9)	Somewhat disagree (10)	Neither agree nor disagree (11)	Somewhat agree (12)	Strongly agree (13)
Do you think the Core Curriculum has impacted your ability to assess students in the manner you think is appropriate? (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Effective Assessment

	Not effective at all (18)	Slightly effective (19)	Moderately effective (20)	Very effective (21)	Extremely effective (22)
How effective is your unit's course assessment process? (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please write any additional comments about your views on the effectiveness of your unit's assessment process:

Do you think instructors have received sufficient resources from the University to meet the requirements of the Core?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Please explain why you think instructors have or have not received sufficient resources to meet requirements of the Core:

Please share any additional comments with the FRPR committee:

(Optional) School:

(Optional) Department: