FRESHMAN/SOPHOMORE ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE
COMMITTEE REPORT

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The University of Kansas

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I. Charge to the Committee

In its institutional mission statement, the University of Kansas aspires to offer undergraduate programs comparable to the best anywhere in the nation. The Committee, appointed by Vice Chancellor David Shulenburger in the summer of 1993, was charged with examining the experience of first and second year students on the Lawrence campus with the aim of ascertaining how well the University is meeting these aspirations.

The first task of the Committee was to interpret its broad charge, establish key issues, and subsequently develop a strategy to gather reliable information allowing us to address that charge. The Committee spent much of the fall of 1993 developing issues and a manageable agenda in preparation for consulting with others in the University community. In addition to discussions among ourselves, we talked to a number of other faculty members and administrators who deal directly with large numbers of freshmen and sophomores (such as the Director of the CLAS Undergraduate Center and the Director of New Student Orientation). A number of individuals and departments communicated in writing to the Committee as well. We sought a sense of the campus "ambience" for learning from the faculty and administrative perspective, and to understand how and why it might be changing.

By the spring of 1994 the Committee had identified some significant issues and was ready to solicit the viewpoints of the broader University community. The Committee focused on three separate, but inherently connected, concerns. First, the adequacy of academic preparation and expectations of incoming, lower-division students drew considerable attention. Concerns here ranged from academic and study skills to educational and learning values to socialized classroom behaviors. Second, the Committee was especially interested in the actual educational experience
of students at KU, from initial orientation and advising to formal in-class instruction to the impact of living arrangements and outside employment on student performance. Finally, the Committee felt it was important to solicit the faculty's view of the priority of teaching lower-division students on the campus, the rewards and incentives for such teaching, and the problems faculty face in attempting to contribute to these students' academic experiences.

The Committee used a number of data sources in its deliberations. In March of 1994 the Committee, with the help of the Office of Institutional Research and Planning (OIRP), organized a series of faculty focus groups to discuss faculty perspectives on teaching and dealing with lower-division students. Communications Studies Professor Beverly Davenport Sypher was the facilitator of the five faculty focus groups; Educational Policy and Leadership Professor Susan Twombly conducted the three focus groups with the GTAs. Both sets of focus groups centered around several issues, especially expectations of students and how well these expectations were being met in practice, the advising process, and how the freshman/sophomore learning experience might be enhanced. In all, roughly 12-15 hours of transcribed data were generated by these focus groups. During the fall of 1995 the Committee turned its attention to student perceptions of their expectations and learning experiences. The Committee gathered data by conducting a series of focus groups with students, as well as surveying 1,570 freshmen and sophomores enrolled in various sections of four 100-level classes (CHEM 184, ENG 101, MATH 101, PSY 104). The focus groups were conducted by Professors Sypher and Twombly, and other Committee members, while the survey instrument was designed administered, and analyzed with the help of OIRP (focus group guidelines and the survey instrument are found in appendix #4). The Committee also examined data previously gathered by OIRP and the Office of Student Affairs on a number of
pertinent issues (such as a 1993 study on academic integrity and cheating at the University). In addition, some members of the Committee looked at data and information from national research studies, since many of the problems facing KU are similar to those now being confronted by higher education generally.

Even though the Committee used multiple sources of information, readers must be cautious in drawing predictions that are too specific from the information and data presented in this report. Individual student and faculty experiences vary tremendously in an institution as large as KU. Programmatic comparisons or inferences concerning certain population subgroups (minority students or scholarship students, e.g.) simply cannot be made with any confidence from our data. Some of the data used are qualitative and impressionistic, and any conclusions drawn from them must be tentative and made with caution. Still, the Committee is confident that we have identified noteworthy strengths and weaknesses in the freshman-sophomore educational experience.

II. The Context of Our Investigation

American higher education typically makes structural change slowly, usually as a result of expansion and diversification. Currently, however, higher education is in the midst of a period of more rapid change, with calls for reform coming from both inside and outside the Academy. Rather than just "more," current discussion also focuses on "better": higher standards, increased attention to both individual student needs and to perceived disadvantaged social groups, better operating efficiencies to control costs, curricular changes, and changes in teaching methods that would, it is argued, lead to students being more adequately prepared for a shifting employment
situation; renewed emphasis on undergraduate teaching with assessment of the results of that
teaching; but also increased uses of university research as tools for economic development. Varied
constituencies, of course, make these multiple and, at times, apparently contradictory claims on
universities. Coupled with these and other arguments for changes in higher education are more
tangible pressures: The decrease in government money to higher education as a percent of total
outlays, the significant increases in tuition costs, and the great expansion of junior and community
colleges. Thus, universities must compete for scarce government money, highly targeted research
money, and for a sufficient number of prepared students. Students, faculty, administrators,
government bodies, other funding agencies, and the general public all have issues that, at present,
do not seem to have fused well into a clear direction or goal for higher education.

Such discussion influences significantly the way incoming students think about "university
life." Who freshmen and sophomores are and what they know and how they perform
academically has received much attention nationally in recent years. The published works of
Astin, Pastorelli, and others on the effects of higher education on students have helped to identify
more clearly perceived problems on many campuses. Facing such problems as cheating, under
preparedness, lack of effort, weak academic skills, and perceived anti-intellectual attitudes on the
part of large numbers of students, colleges and universities have been responding in a number of
ways. Research into student profiles has suggested problems in high school curricular practices,
disruptive family and related social problems, inconsistent and inadequate avenues of financial
support, physical and emotional problems (some related to substance abuse), and changing
attitudes about the nature and function of university education. Movements to address the
Freshman Year now have organized sponsorship with programs, seminars, and meetings to share
Curricular innovations—freshman seminars, extended orientation programs, student internships, formalized assessment means, pedagogical shifts toward "experiential" methods, and the recruitment of talented freshmen-level teachers, for example—are being tried across the country. The attention to multicultural viewpoints has also been a strong current in universities' efforts to accommodate new kinds of students while promoting high academic achievement.

The University of Kansas, of course, reflects many of these national issues. We all can recognize ourselves in those issues raised above. Our own concerns with students' academic skills, with calls for increased accountability, with pressures for publication and funded research, with curricular changes, etc., coupled with perceived pressures from students for the convenient, the practical, and packaged educational experience are shared with colleagues elsewhere. Even though many of the problems are generated by national social forces, the place of freshmen and sophomores in a large research university must probably be worked out uniquely in each institution. The members of the Freshmen-Sophomore Experience Committee have examined freshman-sophomore traits and perceptions at the University. We have come to see the complexities - structural and human - involved in the current situations of freshmen and sophomores. We believe that a continuing dialogue on the issues raised in this report will be necessary to fully address these complexities. Because the first two years' experience for students differs not only by the varying qualities students bring with them, but also by what part of the University they inhabit, this dialogue should take place in different ways in multiple units across the University. That the changing nature of students and of higher education argues for such a dialogue seems clear. The Freshman-Sophomore Experience Committee hopes that this report will serve as a catalyst for discussion of the nature of freshman-sophomore education at this
institution. Indeed, we argue that freshman-sophomore education has been systematically devalued by economic and social forces within and outside the University. It is time to rethink and renew.

III. The Student Coming In

Although sharing the same institution, not all members of the University share the same perceptions of what it is, let alone what it should be. In particular, faculty and incoming students draw on quite different sources of information to shape their respective views. Faculty draw on their own experience and that of colleagues. They may be informed through various kinds of professional literature. Incoming students will have talked with parents, teachers, school counselors, and older students about university life. Some may have read any of a number of guide books to colleges and universities. Both faculty and students, to varying degrees, are exposed to media-propagated information and attitudes toward students and their achievements and universities and their nature. When perception and expectations of students and faculty do not match, disappointments and conflict may arise, leading students to underperform academically and to disappoint faculty.

Perhaps the most crucial expectation is the one related to preparedness of students to do well at the University. Student commentary on this issue differs dramatically from student to student and students tend to differ from faculty. When asked about how well-prepared they were, a number of international students, for example, frequently felt unchallenged intellectually, commenting that much of what is covered in freshman level classes at the University is treated in high school in Europe. And many other students commented that their high schools prepared
them well. But there were significant numbers of students who felt their high schools had not prepared them well, either in general ways or in specific areas. Those weaknesses frequently mentioned include study skills, time management abilities, mathematics, and English (reading, literature and writing). Clearly, students at KU come from highly divergent high schools, some that prepare students rigorously and some that, at least in the opinion of some students, appear to do little preparation of their students to cope with university-level academic expectations.

The faculty sense of student preparedness develops from their experience with students who come from divergent high school backgrounds. And open admissions brings students even from good or strong high schools but who do not achieve well there. Thus, teachers of freshmen and sophomores often speak of the enormous range of student abilities in their classes, causing difficulty in setting an appropriate level for material. Commonly encountered weaknesses mentioned were study skills, quantitative reasoning, analytical reading skills, writing skills, and general background knowledge. These kinds of weaknesses were estimated by faculty to be present in students in some noticeable degree, ranging from one third to a significant majority of their students. A more detailed report regarding the Committee's findings regarding academic preparation is found in Appendix (2).

Behind the issue of preparedness in the narrow sense, preparation in specific academic matters, lies another, larger one: perceptions that shape what university work is like, its purposes, and how one does it. Faculty place strong emphasis on academic values, whereas students seem more heavily focused on personal, social or job-related issues. One frequent answer to the question of "why are you here?" to students was, "it's the next step; it was expected." The sense of college being a matter of course rather than a matter of choice for many students may be behind
such problems noted by faculty as low motivation, poor attendance, and lack of respect for the instructor. In a self-directed situation, those students who lack a self-determined reason for being here are open to lack of focus on academic work.

In addition to students' motivations for attending KU, they are influenced by various anecdotes and beliefs about the University that border on folklore. The fact that Kansas schools are open admission seems to have become part of that folklore. As one student put it: "But if you get into Stanford or MIT or something like that -- (my friends) knew what was going to be expected of them so they were ready to do that. Whereas, if you don't think it doesn't require that much to get in, your expectations of what their work is going to be like and what you're really going to have to do are going to be low as well."

All sources of information from both faculty and students testify to the significant range of differences among individuals. Whereas some students find their courses unchallenging and too easy, others are overwhelmed by the nature and intensity of work here. Whereas faculty perceive a significant number of students with weak skills, knowledge, and motivation, they also comment on the work of strong students. The degree to which a kind of Gresham's Law is at work, where the underprepared and undermotivated influence academic practice, remains an open question. Information from the surveys suggests that as many as one underclassman in three or four struggles with one or more aspects of coping with university life.

Little of the foregoing should be taken as unique to the University of Kansas. National studies support the view that student performance and student expectation frequently do not match the expectations of faculty. When assessing the effects of colleges on their graduates, some researchers have found that it is not rare for graduates (let alone those who leave school before
graduation) to be little affected by their experiences, suggesting a minimal engagement by some students with the goals, values, and expertise of these universities. The question: Why go to college? -- has many answers, with the pursuit of knowledge being only one. Faculty expectations generally involve intellectual development and academic growth. Incoming students may think of the university as a place for the creation and dissemination of knowledge, but they also have quite diverse motivations, with academic values and personal growth appearing to be of relatively lesser importance.

Faculty expectations of students entering the University can be summarized as: Good skills in writing and analytical reading; strong motivation to learn (including willingness to work independently); good general academic skills (note taking, library use, time management, responsible class attendance); respectful behavior toward instructor and fellow students; and good general background knowledge (e.g., history, current affairs).

Student expectations are more difficult to summarize succinctly. Some say they had no expectations. Some focus on social life, some on job training, some on academic life. Some expected college to be easier than it is. Some expected it to be harder than it is. Some expected it to be more personal. Some like potential anonymity. Some see academic work as an obstacle to meeting their life goals. Others see it as a means to achieving these goals. But there is a common desire to maintain standards that may be a foundation for building a stronger more widely held consensus on the nature and purposes of the University. More specifically, it appears that students expect: teachers who are knowledgeable, effective, and fair in the conduct of classes; efficient institutional procedures; and adequate facilities for carrying out their studies.

Clearly, if the academic mission of the University is to be maintained, a better match of
expectations must be achieved. The levels of preparation needed to succeed are currently not widely understood by incoming students.

There is, however, an important expectation on which much agreement emerges more indirectly from faculty and student testimony— the desire for high academic standards, or "rigor," as it is sometimes put. Most faculty and students appear to desire that high, but reasonable academic standards be maintained, and that the quality of classes should not be lowered to accommodate the weakly prepared or poorly motivated.

IV. Freshman/Sophomore Classroom Experience - Student/Faculty Perceptions

The Committee explored with both faculty and students a number of aspects of the educational experience of freshmen and sophomores. From the perspective of the students, we were most interested in whether learning was taking place in the classroom at KU, the degree of interaction students had with their instructors, and the impressions of the caliber of instruction. We wanted to know whether or not the University support processes, such as orientation and advising, were effective, and how living arrangements and work opportunities affected the lower-division educational experience. From faculty, we solicited material concerning the general perception of the caliber of instruction and its level of rigor, faculty motivations and incentives for personally engaging in such activity, general perceptions of teaching first and second year students as a priority in the University's mission, and the degree of involvement and satisfaction of faculty in working with students in areas such as advising.

As might be expected, given the range of expectations discussed earlier, it is difficult to generalize about both student and faculty experiences. Student views about classroom
contributions to learning, for example, varied tremendously, reflecting both differences in student preparation as well as the caliber of instruction. Some found their courses to be challenging and rigorous, while others found them less so. Many praised the instructional staff, while others were quite critical. Some students found their instructors enthusiastic, knowledgeable, and able to communicate clearly, while others had more negative perceptions. In response to the summary question on our survey, ("I have been able to learn readily from most of my teachers?") nearly half of the students agree or strongly agree, but nearly a third had an opposite view.

Since a good portion of the first and second year classroom experience is with graduate teaching assistants, many of the comments from the student focus groups targeted this instructional group. Again, student experiences varied with a number of students volunteering that their best instructors were TAs. But the University's reliance upon TAs for a good deal of its instruction, many without experience in the classroom and some without adequate language skills, was viewed as detrimental by a number of students.

Faculty members typically viewed classroom instruction from a historical perspective, comparing their contemporary experiences with those earlier in their career at KU or other institutions. Most faculty members in the focus groups, as well as TAs, indicated that they highly valued lower-division teaching assignments, noting that teaching such classes was more "fun," and gave them a sense that they had an impact, since beginning students were not yet "jaded," asked more questions, and were more engaging. A sense was conveyed in all the focus groups, including the ones with teaching assistants, that helping students learn was personally important despite greater pressures for other uses of faculty time.

But faculty also typically felt that teaching freshmen and sophomores was an increasingly
Many find larger numbers of students lacking the skills (writing ability, background in mathematics, and study skill deficiencies drew the most attention) and emotional maturity to do rigorous college level work; and therefore struggle with how to apply their own standards in such an environment. A number pointed to the "open admissions" policy of the State as exacerbating the problem. The variation in student abilities and preparation were seen as making it difficult to teach a class demanding a high level of rigor. In some areas, particularly the natural sciences, faculty members felt handicapped in holding students to the standards they prefer because of deficiencies in basic equipment and instructional resources (like newer generation computers). A number of students also complained that the University's equipment, laboratory equipment in particular, did not even come up to the standards of that experienced in high school or at a community college.

Both students and faculty concur that the biggest challenge in lower-division instruction involves dealing with the detrimental effects of class size on student learning. There is good empirical evidence that students learn best in situations where interpersonal contact between student and teacher is maximized and where evaluation of student work is frequent and provides critical feedback. The KU Honors Program, characterized by small classes, eager students, and faculty willing to become personally involved with students and their education, was pointed to by a number of faculty as exemplifying what lower-division education should be about for all students. Large introductory classes, on the other hand, common in many of KU's departments, programs, and schools, appear to be a cue to students that teaching and helping students learn are not high priorities at the University. Students apparently feel less of an obligation to be prepared when the likelihood of being called on is low and they appear to develop a sense of being a
"passive consumer," the very orientation condemned by so many faculty (as one faculty member said in a focus group, "the larger the class size the more the students think we are not serious about engaging minds"). In a number of faculty members' minds, large classes also contribute to behavioral problems (talking or sleeping in classes, rudeness to professors, rustling/noisiness, etc.) in the classroom that are annoying at best, disruptive at worst.

The data gathered by the Committee suggest that many students never deal directly with their instructors during their freshman and sophomore years. In our survey of students, over 40 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, "I usually visit my instructors in their offices at some point in the semester." Student anonymity is apparently quite characteristic of the freshman/sophomore experience at KU. Many of the faculty in the focus groups, as well as a number of administrative representatives from Student Affairs, believe the inability of many students to "connect" and deal personally with someone in authority at KU is perhaps the most serious problem some lower-division students face.

Besides interaction with their classroom instructors, another place for "connecting" to take place within higher education institutions has traditionally been through the advising process. While a number of students and faculty indicated they found the advising experience at KU to be quite satisfying and useful most of both groups were in agreement that the advising process on campus was inadequate (only about 30 percent of the students surveyed were positive about their advising experience).

Generally speaking, faculty complain that there is no continuity, personalization, reward, nor structure for providing good advising. Students expressed concern about the lack of direction given when they sought advice, the mismatch between their needs and their advisors' knowledge,
the impersonal nature of the advising interactions, and the sheer number of students that needed advice compared to the number of available advisors. Another university activity considered vital for "connecting purposes," the orientation of new students program, was also criticized by more than half of the students in our survey as being "unorganized," "too long," an "information overload," and "too impersonal." A report summarizing in more detail the Committee's findings regarding advising is found in Appendix 3.

A number of other issues relating to the freshman/sophomore academic experience were explored by the Committee. Questions concerning academic integrity and cheating among students have received national attention in recent years. A 1993 study conducted by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement in the U.S. Department of Education found that "nearly every published article on academic dishonesty concludes that student cheating on U.S. campuses is both rampant and on the rise."

Our data indicates that as with other institutions of higher learning, academic misconduct is a problem on the KU campus, but there was little agreement among students or faculty as to its degree of seriousness. Interestingly, students attending focus groups, most often students who had been here longer than one semester, revealed that cheating was much more widespread than revealed by the student survey (which sampled a preponderance of first semester freshmen). Only 14 percent of the first year students sampled believed cheating to be a serious problem at KU.

From the faculty perspective, there appears to be a lack of an agreed upon standard of what academic misconduct is, and great variation among faculty concerning how much attention should be paid to academic misconduct violations. Many faculty believe cheating is related to large lecture classes and the proximity of student seating. A number of faculty complained that a
A great deal of extra time was required to deal with academic misconduct ("you have to go through so much (trouble) to prove that they have misbehaved"), while others believed they did not receive departmental support to deal with such problems. Although some departments maintain files on incidents of cheating, it seemed clear to the Committee that the University as a whole does not keep uniform and systemic records of academic misconduct, and there were a number of faculty in the focus groups who believed the University did not deal harshly enough with serious incidents of academic misconduct. A subcommittee report on academic integrity is found in Appendix (4).

The Committee also explored the impact of "outside" influences on the freshman/sophomore experience, ranging from family problems, to outside employment, to living arrangements. There is evidence, for example, that such outside influences, the numbers of students touched by them, the relative strength of these influences compared to university life, and the degree to which these influences weaken rather than strengthen the achievement of freshmen and sophomores have probably been increasing over the years.

Our survey results indicated that the majority of KU’s lower-division students see themselves as either being supported by or at least having control of outside influences on their academic achievement and support. Between 70 and 79 percent of the student respondents feel their living arrangements, social life, or outside employment do not interfere with their academic work. Over 80 percent do not feel negatively affected by family or personal health problems.

But there is a core group of students who are seriously affected by outside factors. Nearly a quarter of those surveyed feel "strongly" that they have little free time because of school and job demands, a figure that rises sharply among the group that works more than 20 hours a week.
Eighteen percent feel “strongly” that employment affects their academic performance. Thirty percent feel their living arrangements are a detriment to academic work, 10 percent feeling strongly about it. Overall, roughly one third of the freshmen and sophomores are negatively affected by some form of outside influence. Ten percent feel strongly about it, disproportionately concentrated among those who work more than 20 hours a week and have weak peer support groups. Readers of this report interested in learning more about the impact of outside factors should look at the pertinent questions (#s 6, 17, 18, 19, 20, 24, and 26) found in the student survey (Appendix #1).

Finally, the Committee explored with faculty members in the focus groups their sense of the University’s commitment to teaching and advising lower-division students. Material from the focus groups would appear to suggest that while in some areas of the University teaching and interacting with freshmen and sophomores is valued highly (four year professional programs appear to be most appreciative of faculty engaged in teaching introductory classes), in units like the College (where the bulk of first and second year students do their work) it is perceived as being given less recognition. Faculty perceive research productivity to be far and away the most important factor in the tenure/promotion and merit salary process, despite claims that research and teaching contributions are often proclaimed to be equal. According to a number of participants in the focus groups, only in rare instances is teaching lower-division students accorded the status of teaching at the graduate level. In general, the perception gleaned from the focus groups was that most faculty believe that teaching lower-division students is personally rewarding, but essentially unrecognized in the University’s reward structure, which is skewed in the direction of research and teaching more advanced undergraduates and graduate students. Many faculty in the focus
groups believed such an incentive structure to be unfortunate, negatively affecting the caliber of undergraduate instruction, and should be changed.

The views of the KU faculty participating in our focus groups would seem to parallel roughly those presented in A Study of Research University on the Balance Between Research and Undergraduate Teaching, a research project conducted by scholars from Syracuse University examining data gathered from faculty and administrators representing 47 public and private universities (19,500 faculty were surveyed as well as 2,415 deans, unit heads, and administrators). The findings from this study (the University of Kansas was not among the institutions surveyed) support the view that most faculty believe that teaching and research should be accorded equal weight in the status and reward structure in higher education institutions and this typically is not the case. Even in Research I and Research II universities (according to the Carnegie classification), “faculty at the doctorate-granting institutions feel that the relative importance of research and undergraduate teaching should favor teaching in the future,” to get the system more in balance.

Overall, the Committee believes our findings on the freshman/sophomore experience suggest that while many students at the University of Kansas are receiving an exceptionally good education, especially given the financial constraints the University is operating under, we are troubled by the fact that there appears to be a core group (perhaps a quarter to a third of lower-division students) who never do “connect” with the institution. The University must do better in addressing the concerns of these students or recruit those who will connect.

The University of Kansas has a talented faculty and administrative support staff. It is strong enough to deal with self-criticism and respond in positive ways. We believe we have
identified a number of areas of concern, areas no doubt that are proving to be challenging to research/teaching universities across the nation. We are convinced that many of the recommendations that we are putting forth can make KU an even better educational institution, offering students and faculty alike the kind of creative, engaging, learning community that can only be provided in a teaching/research setting.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Broad Policy Recommendations**

1. The Committee believes that it is essential that the University community as a whole, as well as individual units, engage in a dialogue, in the broadest sense of the term, over the priority of undergraduate instruction in the educational mission. In particular, is the balance among lower-division, upper-division, and the graduate instruction appropriate and compatible with the University's mission?

2. All academic departments should be encouraged to review the course content of all freshman and sophomore classes for the purpose of assessing the level of academic performance and achievement faculty expect from students. Such discussions are to be seen as encouraging sufficient levels of rigor in the nature of lower division courses to prepare students for the challenges of upper division courses.

3. The Committee strongly supports the University's effort to establish qualified admissions standards. In light of the political reality that may not be met soon, the Committee recommends a dramatic increase in aggressive efforts to recruit and retain higher ability students, including a priority of attracting such students by providing scholarships and financial aid.
Until such time as the University has the ability to establish admission standards for new students, priority should be given to recruiting students who are well prepared academically and those who possess superior intellectual ability.

4. The academic officers of the University of Kansas are encouraged to articulate a vision of the University's mission compatible with the view that teaching lower-division students at a high level of quality is among the top priorities of the institution. The vision has to be believed by the University community and valued internally, and the best way to do this is by actions as well as rhetoric. Any educational reforms in a decentralized institution like the University of Kansas must come from the leadership of both administration and faculty.

 Specific Recommendations

A. Recruiting and Academic Support of Students

1. The University should initiate an aggressive informational campaign that identifies the unique and high quality undergraduate educational programs that are provided by a comprehensive, research university. The University should work to dispel the popular notion that quality undergraduate education is the antithesis of academic research.

2. Recruiting materials, information, and practices should include clear statements of factors that mitigate against good academic achievement. Parents and prospective students should know, for example, how deleterious working 20+ hours off campus can be, and that weak preparation in basic subject areas can lead to more generalized problems with coping in college. Students might be advised to delay college entry if serious health, family, or financial problems might jeopardize academic achievement.
3. Residence halls and other living units within the University should be encouraged to develop academic support programs, especially targeted at "at-risk students"; and also of varied and appropriate kinds to the members of the living group.

4. A possible reassessment of the financial aid structure might be undertaken to maximize campus employment of less than twenty hours and minimize the need for off-campus employment over 20 hours per week.

5. Academic Affairs should coordinate and strengthen academic support services on campus to assist students who come to the University inadequately prepared to do college level academic work. Persistently weak academic skills (such as writing and verbal communication) should receive special attention. Personal support and counseling programs should be encouraged to examine possible programs targeted at the entering student. Such counseling might involve controlling the number of hours and courses taken. The University should identify new students whose ACT scores suggest that they may have difficulty with their academic studies and require them to complete a prescribed program in academic skill enhancement.

Students who are judged to be academically at-risk should be given a predetermined course schedule for their first two semesters with a carefully corresponding maximum number of credit hours. Courses should be selected for the students to maximize the probability of their long-term success at KU. An analysis of transcripts of successful at-risk students will need to be conducted to determine the patterns that lead to success. This plan will need to be initiated in conjunction with the at-risk advising system.

6. Summer and first year programs that focus on academic life should be reviewed and extended. Academically at-risk students, those with low entrance scores or low rank in graduating
class, and those students planning on working significant hours off-campus may be especially encouraged to participate.

The University should establish an appropriate number of residence halls as Freshman-Sophomore Academic Centers where a program of academic support services would be available and an environment conducive to learning and personal development would be maintained. While all new students should be encouraged to live in such residence halls, students inadequately prepared to do college level work should be a target population for these residence halls.

7. Weaknesses in academic, career, and personal advising should be addressed. Although these weaknesses are complex and of long standing, such steps as the following are recommended. As in the professional schools, students in the College should be given individual advisor assignments. Group advising for specially targeted students (those at-risk, those having difficulty selecting a major, for example) that might involve such offices as the Career Counseling and Planning Center should be given special consideration. The new "at-risk" advising project in the College that assigns specially selected Advising Support Center staff and faculty advisors to those students with low ACT scores should be continued. Specific advisors for pre-professional school advising should be identified.

8. The support given to advisors should be strengthened. Advisor information sessions should be expanded to include diverse information about students' academic needs. Such sessions should be open to all faculty. Improved information tools for advisors--both art forms and on-line resources--would supplement live workshops or development opportunities. Departments across the University, along with various promotion and tenure committees, should be encouraged to feature advising activities more prominently in the evaluation of faculty effort. This focus would
be consistent with other recommendations in this report to consider broadening the definition of teaching activities in the University.

B. Academic Responsibilities

1. The Committee believes that the University is obligated to communicate to all students "the basic tenets upon which higher education was founded - academic honesty and scholarship." It should do so.

2. The University needs to develop a policy that better defines academic misconduct along with a clearly defined disciplinary treatment. Faculty and teaching assistants should understand and communicate to all students these policies at the beginning of each semester. According to a national study on academic dishonesty, "Students will not internalize ethical values if they believe faculty are apathetic or uniformed about the process of detecting and sanctioning offenders. Faculty must clearly understand institutional policies on academic dishonesty for students to understand what is appropriate and inappropriate behavior."

The University should clarify the definition of academic cheating and simplify the process by which violations are adjudicated.

3. According to a national study, "The University should be committed to enforcing these policies by giving the faculty the necessary administrative and legal support to deal with academic misconduct." The Committee agrees efforts should be made to make the policies and the procedures as simple and as straightforward as possible.

4. The Committee believes that cheating is not a major problem when a mechanism is in place to make it difficult. Commonly used mechanisms include different sets of exams, essay type exams, and small size classes (whenever possible). Faculty and teaching assistants should be
encouraged to develop and use such mechanisms to make cheating as difficult as possible.

5. The University should keep accurate records on academic misconduct, and should be informed of past academic misconduct cases and the resulting disciplinary actions taken in order to identify initial effectiveness.

The Committee recommends that a centralized reporting structure be established for students who have been found guilty of academic misconduct and non-academic misconduct. Currently, academic misconduct records are kept at the school level, and information about misconduct that may have occurred in another school or outside the classroom is not available when sanctions are determined. Centralized record keeping will allow the use of such information in cases where students have been found guilty of subsequent violations. Any information on non-academic misconduct will also be made available after the student is found guilty of academic misconduct and prior to sanctions being imposed. We recommend that the Office of Student Life be responsible for this function.

C. Relating to Teaching

1. First year and second year students need a greater exposure to full-time faculty, and faculty need more exposure to such students. This could be accomplished in two ways: first, rethinking teaching assignments so that more faculty teach first and second year students than at present and, secondly, using more faculty as first year advisors. The University might consider something like the pilot program at the University of Maryland which makes it possible for more freshmen in the program to have at least one small class (25 students or fewer) with a professor.

2. Higher ability students are often disenchanted and demoralized by the lack of rigor in
their lower division courses necessitated by the tremendous variability in preparedness and ability of some of their classmates. While the Honors Program meets the needs of the very highest ability students, it is suggested that the University explore the possibility of expanding the Honors Program to include those students with exceptional strengths in specific areas of knowledge. It is also suggested that the University explore initiating enrichment programs of various sorts to be administered through living units.

3. We need to provide a climate that will enable faculty to improve their teaching without being penalized for seeking help. Creating a teaching resource center and designing a serious mentorship program (perhaps building on the current Colleague to Colleague project) for new faculty may well be two possibilities for creating a positive climate for professional development.

The University should establish a center for the improvement of teaching where faculty members could receive assistance in improving teaching skills and techniques. The Multicultural Resource Center should offer seminars and workshops to assist faculty in understanding different learning styles and the means by which course content could be more culturally sensitive and inclusive.

4. Classroom expectations should be explicitly communicated to students at the start of each course by the instructor. Such expectations should include not only assigned readings and course requirements, but also rules regarding attendance, plagiarism, late papers, makeup exams, and expectations for class participation and comportment. Rules and expectations should be enforced consistently and equitably. The Committee feels that many difficult classroom situations could be avoided if a common understanding of expected behavior existed and both faculty and
students assume responsibility for a positive learning environment.

5. The University needs to develop and communicate mechanisms for dealing with serious breaches of disruptive behavior in the classroom. Instructors should be made aware of their options in such situations and should feel confident that they have the support of the University administration in their decisions. It would also be useful for the University to sponsor various training sessions or forums where instructional staff could share ideas concerning dealing with disruptive situations in the classroom.

6. The Committee recommends that an avenue for ongoing systematic training of GTA's be established (faculty might want to become involved as well). A number of foundations are active in funding programs to add to existing strong departmental training programs preparing college teachers. Academic officers at the University are strongly encouraged to seek such funding. Professional development seminars for new and continuing faculty should be encouraged.

7. The area of evaluation of freshman-sophomore teaching needs to be reconsidered, including the types of evaluation used, the uses to which they are put, and how the information is disseminated. The Committee found evidence that some people believe the standard evaluation instruments used (particularly the C&I Survey), in certain instances, diminish academic rigor and demands in the classroom, discourage innovative teaching, and decrease the pool of faculty eager to teach introductory courses, which faculty frequently perceive to receive lower evaluations than for higher level courses. Moreover, summative rankings are much less helpful in improving teaching than more diagnostic methods of evaluation that reflect the complexity of teaching activities. Evaluation along the lines of the "portfolio" model rather than reliance upon a standard
student survey instrument is preferred.

8. The Committee believes we need a much broader conception of what a "teaching contribution" would entail, incorporating not only classroom instruction, but also advising activity in its broadest sense; as well as dealing with students outside of the classroom such as serving on various student-centered committees, advising student organizations, helping the University recruit students, and other activities which involve "teaching," but are often thought of as "service." In the merit and promotion process the broader conception of teaching contribution should be applied.

9. The Committee believes that the incentive structure for faculty in the University is skewed in directions away from teaching lower division students, and efforts must be made to get the system more in balance. We think lower division teaching should be fully valued and rewarded. The normative 40/40/20 formula should be made real in the faculty reward structure.

The Committee believes that at a research university like the University of Kansas, teaching and research are mutually reinforcing activities, but that in many disciplines and units research and teaching in practice are somewhat independent activities that compete for a faculty member's time. Both are necessary and vital to a strong university, and both should be rewarded with incentives designed to encourage outstanding performance.

10. The Committee believes that members of the faculty range a great deal in their capacities to do a good job in the classroom and/or in the research arena. Even though this is a research institution, individual faculty who have achieved tenure may play varying productive roles across their careers. The University should encourage these talents by rewarding individual effort while still maintaining broad institutional goals. Some faculty members, for example, might
contribute more to the institution if they altered the mix of their teaching, research, and service activities, and should be evaluated accordingly. Thus, post-tenure individual faculty members especially talented in teaching could be encouraged in that activity, while the strong researchers would also be rewarded. Professional development activities, flexibility, and reward structures should be developed to capitalize on a range of individual academic talents. The 40/40/20 evaluation formula for individual faculty members, after the award of tenure, should be adjusted if it is mutually beneficial to do so.

11. The Committee believes that teaching potential has to be more of a factor in initial hiring than currently seems to be the case across the University. At all levels of instructional staff, teaching skills and experience should receive careful scrutiny from hiring committees. New tenure-track professors, adjunct professors, and instructors should not be hired without some genuine inquiry into the likelihood of their potential success in the classroom.

12. Facilities and resources in certain teaching areas, particularly in the natural sciences, computer sciences, and mathematics must be upgraded if teaching and learning are to take place at the highest levels of rigor (upper-division and graduate instruction are affected as well). Upgrading laboratory and technological facilities for faculty and students in all areas including the humanities, social and natural sciences, and professional schools must be made a priority of the institution.

13. The University should establish a standing advisory committee to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs to continuously analyze, monitor and evaluate the quality of undergraduate education programs and services. Because the College plays such a central role in the education of freshmen and sophomores, the proposed advisory committee should have strong
representation from the College.

7/28/95