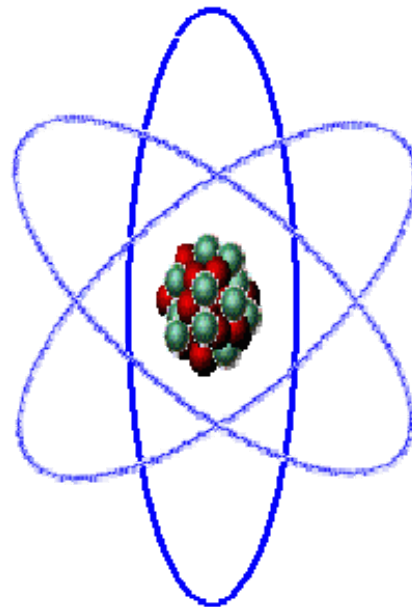
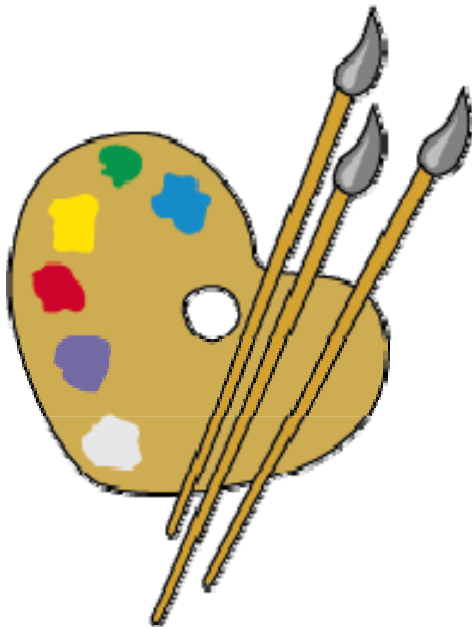


**UMKC**  
**Arts and Sciences Student  
Council**  
**General Education**  
**Requirements Report**

**COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES**  
**February 2008**

Email us at [umkcassc@umkc.edu](mailto:umkcassc@umkc.edu)



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# College of Arts and Sciences

## **Dean:**

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## **Associate Deans:**

Thomas C. Sandreczki

Thomas Stroik

Charles J. Wurrey

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**Secretary**

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**SGA Senator**

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James Gilmore

## Gen Ed requirements revisited

[Joshua Seiden](#)

For students feeling bogged down by general education requirements, there could be relief on the way.

The College of Arts and Sciences (A&S) is considering a reduction in the amount of general education credit hours to earn a degree. Currently, 66 credit hours are required.

Dr. Thomas Stroik, associate dean of A&S, is heading the subcommittee investigating general education requirements. Along with Stroik, seven department chairs work on the subcommittee.

"The college tried, over the last five years, twice before to revisit general ed. requirements," Stroik said during the Oct. 8 A&S Student Council meeting.

"Both times the faculty rejected the initiatives, so we're trying something that invests the departments more directly and hopefully we'll be able to come up with a program that is accepted. I think it will be."

In addition to reducing the amount of general education credits, the subcommittee is pondering a "two-platform" system, Stroik said. Under this system, A&S would require a certain number of core credit hours, with individual departments determining the distribution of remaining general education requirements.

For example, one department may require more English and less foreign language courses while another may require students to complete more credit hours in philosophy courses.

"Now, this is very early in the discussion," Stroik said. "This isn't a promissory note, but it is a direction we're investigating and I believe it is a very fertile direction at present. More importantly, the departments might have control over a portion of what the requirements are."

Stroik said he is enthused by the prospects of tailoring the curriculum to better meet students' needs.

"I think that's really an exciting opportunity that we have as we look at the structure of the college," he said.

A&S Student Council President Klassie Alcine said students would welcome change.

"For students, the changes would mean less time wasted trying to pass classes that they will remember nothing about," she said. "We need to know the basics like English, math, arts and

sciences. Foreign languages should be an optional choice. We get to spend less money on classes that we won't ever use again in life."

Through an initiative in the A&S Student Council, Alcine has compiled and distributed a survey pertaining to general education requirements. So far, she has received roughly 350 responses.

Common complaints have been the Written English Proficiency Test (WEPT) and foreign language requirements, Alcine said.

"Students would get to take more classes that they want rather than feeling forced into seeing their money go to wasteful classes," she said. "I can't tell how many times people can't remember Spanish even though they spent 15 credit hours doing it. This will make sure that the major and department you have will cater to your needs. The only downside would be if someone decided to switch a department. Then they would be under new rules."

Alcine said she encourages students to provide input. To contact the A&S Student Council, visit <http://studo.umkc.edu/assc/>.

[jseiden@unews.com](mailto:jseiden@unews.com)

# The Study

An initiative of the Pro-Active Arts & Sciences Student Council was conducted. The Student Council chose 15 random college classrooms to conduct a survey. The number of surveys completed was 403 over a 2 month period. The survey examined what students thought about the current general education requirements and what areas needed improvement of the College of Arts and Sciences.

**Thesis: Students want general education requirements to be reduced and more major led requirements.**

## Why have General Education Requirements?

The goal of General Education Requirements is to have a broad knowledge on core subjects: Science, Math, English, Communication, and Foreign Language. To insure that every student in the College of Arts and Sciences can receive knowledge on a range of subjects that will benefit student's in future educational endeavors.

## Current: College of Arts and Sciences General Requirements

### A. Communication (12 credit hours)

Every student must complete the following:

1. First Year Writing course. English [110](#) or Humanities [105P](#). This requirement may be satisfied by scoring 30 or higher on the English subsection of the ACT or 690 or higher on the verbal subsection of the SAT.
2. Sophomore-Level Writing Intensive course. English [225](#) or Humanities [202P](#).
3. The UMKC [Written English Proficiency Test \(WEPT\)](#). The WEPT is a prerequisite for all writing intensive courses and should be taken after a student has completed English 225 and 45 credit hours. The WEPT is also a graduation requirement for all students. Those who fail the WEPT twice must take English [299](#); this course, which does not count towards the degree, will serve as the WEPT for students who earn a C- or better in the course.
4. Junior/Senior-Level Writing Intensive (WI) course. Upper-level (300/400-level) Writing Intensive courses are designated with WI or PW following the course number. Writing Intensive courses should be completed during the junior or senior year and after the completion of the three requirements above.
5. One course in which oral argumentation is a major focus. This requirement is met by the courses
  - Communication Studies [110](#), [212](#), [213](#), [254P](#), [311](#), [343](#),
  - Theater [121](#) or
  - Humanities [404PW](#).

### B. Mathematical, Symbolic and Logical Reasoning (6 credit hours minimum)

Every student must complete the following:

1. Mathematics [110](#) or higher (except Math 125), or demonstrate competency equivalent to four units (years) of acceptable high school mathematics, beginning with Algebra I or higher.
2. One course requiring extensive use of mathematical, symbolic or logical reasoning. This requirement is met by the courses
  - Any mathematics course at or above the 200 level; or
  - Philosophy [222](#). (Note: Philosophy 222 may be chosen here only if it has not been chosen as the philosophy requirement below.)

### C. Foreign Language and Culture (13 credit hours)

Every student must complete the following:

1. Three semesters of the same foreign language (110, 120 and 211) are required for all B.A. degrees (but not for B.S. degrees, as of Spring 2002).
  - Students who have satisfactorily completed two years of a foreign language in high school will be exempt from the 110 college-level course and will be required to complete only two additional (120 college-level and above) courses in that same language.
  - Students who completed four years of the same foreign language in high school must complete only one additional sophomore-level (211 or above) course in that same language.
2. One course that focuses on cultural perspectives of an interdependent global environment. This requirement is met by the courses

- History [201](#), [202](#), [206](#), [208](#),
- Geography [200](#), [202](#),
- Sociology/Anthropology [103](#),
- Political Science [220](#),
- Economics [412](#) or
- Urban Planning and Design [260](#).

#### **D. Computer and Information Technology (3 credit hours)**

Every student must demonstrate competence equivalent to a programming course or software application course that includes substantial computer experience. This requirement is met by one of the following courses

- Art [114](#),
- A&S [100](#),
- Computer Science [100](#), [101](#), [105P](#) or
- A computer application course in the student's major/program.

#### **E. Literature and Philosophy (6 credit hours)**

Every student must complete the following:

1. One of the following literature courses
  - Classics [210](#), [319](#),
  - English [213](#), [214](#), [215](#), [241](#), [311](#), [317](#), [319](#), [321](#), [323](#), [325](#), [326](#), [327](#), [331](#), [333](#),
  - Humanities [203P](#),
  - World Literature 210, 220,
  - French [301](#), [303](#), [304](#),
  - German [301](#),
  - Spanish [301](#), [303](#), [304](#), [373](#), [374](#), [401](#) or [402](#).
2. One of the following courses
  - Philosophy [210](#),
  - Philosophy [221](#),
  - Philosophy [222](#), (Note: Philosophy 222 may be chosen here only if it has not been chosen as the symbolic and logical reasoning requirement above) or
  - Humanities [106P](#).

#### **F. Distribution Requirements for General Education**

1. Social and Behavioral Sciences (three courses, 9 hours). The nine hours chosen to complete the social and behavioral sciences distribution requirement in (a.) and (b.) below must come from at least two different departments.

##### *a. Constitution Requirement:*

Every student must fulfill the Missouri state requirement to take a course covering the United States Constitution and the Missouri State Constitution before graduation. Courses that satisfy this requirement are

- History [101](#), [102](#), [360R](#) (American History),
- Political Science [210](#) (American Government), [409P](#) or
- Social Science [102P](#).

*b. Distribution Electives:*

Every student must also complete two courses from the social and behavioral sciences. Students may select courses from the following departments/areas:

- American Studies
  - Anthropology
  - Criminal Justice and Criminology
  - Economics
  - Geography (regional or cultural, which includes [105](#), [200](#), [202](#), [210](#), [300](#), [309](#), [311](#), [329](#), 332, [333](#), [340](#), [341](#), [342](#), [350](#), [351](#), [352](#), [355](#), [398](#), [403](#), 405, [410](#), [415](#), [435](#), [437](#), [460](#), [489](#) or [496](#) only)
  - History
  - Political Science
  - Psychology
  - Sociology
  - Foundations of Social Sciences [210](#) or 220
2. Physical and Biological Sciences (two courses, 8 hours minimum). Every student must complete at least two lecture courses in the physical and/or biological sciences. One of the courses must be a lecture/laboratory combination. Students may select courses from the following departments/areas:
- Chemistry
  - Environmental Science
  - Geography (physical geography only, which includes [150](#), [203](#), [215](#), [314](#), [317](#), [319](#), [335](#), [336](#), [360](#), [401](#), [402](#), [404](#), [406](#), [426](#), [430](#), 435, [442](#), [444](#), [448](#) or [450](#))
  - Geology
  - Natural Science
  - Physical Science
  - Physics
  - Biology
3. Humanities and Fine Arts (two courses, 6 hours).

*a. Fine Arts:*

Every student must complete one of the following courses:

- Art History [110](#), [110P](#)
- Environmental Design [110](#)
- Theater [130](#), [210](#)
- Conservatory [120](#)

*b. Humanities:*

Every student must complete one additional course from any of the following departments/areas:

- Art (Studio)
- Art History
- Communication Studies
- English
- Foreign Languages
- Humanities
- Philosophy

- Theater
4. Interdisciplinary Cluster Course (one course, 3 hours). Every student is required to complete a junior/senior interdisciplinary cluster course. Cluster courses provide opportunities to study special themes or historical periods from the perspective of several different disciplines at once and to show how different disciplines complement each other to form a more comprehensive understanding of a given topic. See the College's previous catalog subsection on "Interdisciplinary Cluster Courses" for additional information and a list of approved cluster courses.

### **G. Capstone Course**

All students in a major must complete a course designated as a capstone course in their major.

### **H. Additional Requirements and Restrictions**

- A minimum of 120 total credit hours is required for graduation.
- At least 36 credit hours must be at the 300-400 level.
- A 2.0 overall GPA is required for graduation. However, the required major GPA may be higher, as determined by each department individually.
- A maximum of 3 hours of activity courses in physical education may be applied toward the 120 minimum hours required for graduation.

## **What do other universities do in the Midwest?**

### **KU**

Foreign Language-Requires 4 semesters, if it wasn't taken in high school.

English- 3 courses

Website:

<http://www.collegesas.ku.edu/advising/Handbook/Requirements/gened.shtml>

### **MU**

Foreign Language- optional, by major Foreign Language, required hours are approved by the major department.

English-1 is freshman English, 1 writing intensive course towards your specific major, 1 writing intensive course

Many departments, degrees and majors have more specific requirements for foundation course work in addition to the University general education requirement.

Website:

<http://generaleducation.missouri.edu/requirements/#footnote2>

### **UMSL**

UMSL requires 42 General Education Requirement Hours

Foreign Language- Requires 13 credit hours

English- Students must complete a minimum of two courses including freshman English and major English

Website:

[http://www.umsu.edu/bulletin/TOC/Undergraduate\\_Study/General\\_Education\\_Requirements/general\\_education\\_requirements.htm](http://www.umsu.edu/bulletin/TOC/Undergraduate_Study/General_Education_Requirements/general_education_requirements.htm)

# THE SURVEY

## General Education Requirements Survey

Are you satisfied with the current General Education Requirements?

Yes

No

Do you think UMKC requires too many General Education Requirements?

Yes

No

Would you eliminate some General Education Requirements?

Yes

No

If yes, what subjects

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Would you eliminate the WEPT?

Yes

No

If yes, why

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Would you agree with individual departments having more discretion when it comes to the distribution of credits students must take beyond their majors.

Yes

No

What would you change?

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Who is your favorite professor in the College of Arts and Sciences?

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Why?

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Are there anymore issues that you think the College of Arts and Sciences should address?

Yes

No

If yes, why?

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Arts and Sciences Student Council General Education Requirements Report				
Satisfied with GER?	Too Many?	Eliminate some GER?	Eliminate WEPT?	Individual departments GER?
N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Y	N	N	Y	N
Y	N	Y	Y	Y
N	Y	Y	Y	Y
N	Y	Y	N	Y
Y	N	N	Y	Y
Y	N	N	N	Y
N	Y	Y	N	Y
N	Y	Y	N	N
N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Y	Y	Y	N	Y
N	Y	Y	Y	Y
N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
N	Y	N	N	Y
N	Y	Y	Y	N
Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Y	Y	Y	Y	N
N	N	Y	Y	Y
N	Y	Y	N	N
Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Y	N	N	Y	Y
Y	N	Y	Y	Y
N	Y	Y	Y	Y
N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Y	Y	N	N	N
N	Y	Y	Y	Y
N	Y	Y	Y	Y
N	Y	Y	Y	Y
N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Y	N	N	N	Y
Y	N	N	N	N
N	Y	Y	Y	Y
N	Y	Y	N	Y
N	Y	Y	N	Y
N	N	N	N	Y
N	N	N	N	Y
N	Y	Y	Y	Y
N	Y	Y	N	Y
N	Y	Y	Y	Y
N	Y	Y	Y	Y
N	Y	Y	Y	Y

















# Student Responses

## Would you eliminate some General Education Requirements?

### If yes,

- “Mostly I would like to see science requirements lower or eliminated”
- ”Fine Arts, History and Science”
- “Foreign Language should be optional.”
- “Cluster course.”
- “WEPT”
- “I would decrease the amount of humanities credits for science students.”
- “The ones that don’t pertain to your major. We had enough basic classes in high school, I’m done learning things that have nothing to do with my profession.”
- “Electives”
- “Foreign Language, I would agree with one semester for basic understanding.”
- “Foreign Language”
- “Science Lab”
- “History”
- “Science, foreign language.”
- “Speech.”
- “Decrease foreign language/ science minimum hours, allow 2-3 classes to be taken pass/fail.”
- “Science”
- “Foreign Language”
- “Math, Science”
- “Foreign Language doesn’t benefit me and my future career goals.”
- “Cluster Course is a waste of time and money.”
- “Cluster Course”
- “I think they should benefit specific majors.”
- “There should be a limited number of gen.edu requirements , the remaining number should be determined based on the students major.”
- “Spanish”
- “I think it should vary on what a person major is.”
- “Upper level English, some humanities”
- “Spanish”
- “ Foreign language, humanities”
- “Humanities and Social sciences, they have nothing to do with my major which already takes enough time.”
- “Science.”
- “Foreign language, fine arts.”
- “Foreign language, gen eds. should be shorter because I feel like there are a waste of time and money. Plus it is not in my field of major.”
- “Math”

- “Foreign language requirements should not apply to a history major, American history.”
- “History”
- “Foreign language, some English.”
- “Should depend on your major.”
- “Foreign language, cluster course.”
- “So many hours”
- “I don’t think the required number of hours should be decreased one of the main points of a college education is its being well-rounded and complete.”
- 

## **Would you eliminate the WEPT?**

### **If yes, why**

- “The WEPT seems unnecessary, if a student has already completed eng. 225, it seems like a waste of time to prove their competency with the WEPT.”
- “It’s long overdue and has no beneficial long term goal.”
- “Doesn’t benefit my degree.”
- “If you make it too college, you shouldn’t have to prove you can write an essay because you already possess those skills from high school.”
- “Though it is necessary to learn how to cite sources and structure an essay for classes, it is generally not needed for work after college. If you do keep it, make it a freshman year requirement.”
- “WI is already in classes already, it doesn’t make sense.”
- “It doesn’t benefit my educational processes.”
- “It’s redundant if you have already had WI classes English classes etc. it’s no need.”
- “I do not think it is fair to the majority of students who know how to write an essay. Students should be asked to write an essay as part of the application for admission. Those students who are admitted but still need additional essay skills should be required to pass an additional test prior to graduation. Currently, I believe the students who do pass the WEPT already possess good writing ability. The students who fail are the ones who need an additional course to provide better writing skills.”
- “We continually prove that we know how to write, so why do we then need a test on top of that?”
- “I feel like students get enough assessment of their writing abilities in classes.”
- “Because we take English and are required to write papers like this.”
- “It’s simply a waste of time.”
- “It doesn’t test your writing skills.”
- “It seems difficult and not all people major in English related fields.”
- “It’s a waste of time; I’m not English major. If I made it this far, clearly I know how to write a sentence and document sources.”
- “Composition classes should prepare students and test writing proficiency.”
- “I don’t see that it is effective. It doesn’t prove anything.”
- “If you get into college in the first place you should have good writing skills.”
- “You pass the English class and you just might not test well.”

- “It poses no significant purpose to me besides allowing me to graduate. Also, I was always under the assumption that we know how to write an essay by the fourth year of school.”
- “Doesn’t prove anything. If you can’t write you shouldn’t be in college.”
- “Both English required classes should cover everything for the WEPT, if WEPT is kept, then include it was a requirement to pass the required English courses.”
- “Many majors aren’t writing intensive themselves and other testing assesses these abilities.”
- “If proves nothing. You should be able to write and read relatively well in order to get into college in the first place.”
- “Why should students pass a writing test when teachers are obviously grading students in the normal class atmosphere.”
- “Pointless, if you can’t write in English, then don’t go to college.”
- “No reason to take it.”
- “It’s useless, waste of time. Almost everyone passes and if they don’t it’s usually because they didn’t cite properly. If you pass an English course you should be able to graduate.”
- “Not really beneficial”
- “Because it’s so much stress.”

### **What would you change?**

- “If your major is in some science or history, for example, classes pertaining to those fields should be required. But, say you’re an English major, taking history class that isn’t going to offer you much more than what you learned in high school and a hassle you don’t need.”
- “Eliminate unnecessary classes, lessen credit hours it is ridiculous.”
- “The number of credit hours needed for non major courses is ridiculous. I would like to take classes that are geared towards my major. I’d be saving time and I’d be more prepared for the world after I graduate.”
- “Cluster courses should be made more available to the students.”
- “Maybe a major would require some but not all gen Eds.”
- “Personally, why would you lower the requirements. It lowers the quality of education. The more you learn in various areas the better rounded and educated the individual will become. If anything raise the standards. I don’t want a lawyer, dentist, etc... to have taken the easy road because they may cut corners where it comes to me.”
- “Having to take less general credits to graduate.”
- “For my major, I have only 13 classes left but that will only give me 109 credit hours. Which means, I now have to take two summer semesters of random classes to finish when I am schedules to lower general education requirements and make them major specified.”
- “Take hours that go towards your major.”
- “I would change the number of hours because that’s time and money that can be used toward my major.”
- “Allow certain departments (biology, chemistry) to decrease the number of worthless humanities classes we take, but people should have to take a foreign language.”
- “There are too many requirements in general.”
-

**Are there anymore issues that you think the College of Arts and Sciences should address?**

- “The tuition is way too high.”
- “I do not want to pay for anything that I can’t benefit from.”
- “Freshman retention rate.”
- “Major advisors to have more contact with their students.”

## CONCLUSION:

It is clear that students want less general education requirements. The survey of students reveals that only 6% of students are satisfied with the current General Education Requirements. More than 82% of students feel that there are too many General Education Requirements and 85% want to eliminate some. The reason why the WEPT is mentioned in this report is because of the students call for change and more than 77% of students want to eliminate the WEPT. Students want individual departments to have more discretion over their major requirements with 87% wanting more individual department action.

From the survey the council found that students want foreign language to be eliminated. Some students feel that there are no long term benefits for 3 semesters of a foreign language. Students feel that the WEPT is not beneficial and unnecessary.

## Arts and Sciences Student Council Recommendations:

### NEW College of Arts and Sciences General Requirements

## A. Communication (12 credit hours)

Every student must complete the following:

1. First Year Writing course. English [110](#) or Humanities [105P](#). This requirement may be satisfied by scoring 30 or higher on the English subsection of the ACT or 690 or higher on the verbal subsection of the SAT.
2. Sophomore-Level Writing Intensive course. English [225](#) or Humanities [202P](#).
3. Junior/Senior-Level Writing Intensive (WI) course. Upper-level (300/400-level) Writing Intensive courses are designated with WI or PW following the course number. Writing Intensive courses should be completed during the junior or senior year and after the completion of the three requirements above.
4. One course in which oral argumentation is a major focus. This requirement is met by the courses
  - Communication Studies [110](#), [212](#), [213](#), [254P](#), [311](#), [343](#),
  - Theater [121](#) or
  - Humanities [404PW](#).

### 1. Eliminate the WEPT

**-- Since 75% of students pass the WEPT it is unneeded for the majority of students. The UMKC [Written English Proficiency Test \(WEPT\)](#). The WEPT should be a conditional test administered to only students who fail to perform adequately in the First Year Writing course. A writing sheet of criteria is given to the instructor who decides if a students needs to have further test to determine their writing ability and citing sources. The council strongly feels that students are being penalized for taking an extra to prove their writing ability. UMKC is the only school in the UM system that requires a WEPT therefore it is unneeded. The WEPT should only be given to students who have obvious problems with citing sources, analyzing, reflecting upon and using the sources to support a thesis. --**

## B. Foreign Language and Culture (6 credit hours)

Every student must complete the following:

### **2. Eliminate one course of foreign language and make each course 3 hours.**

3. **TWO semesters** of the same foreign language (110, and 120) are required for all B.A. degrees (but not for B.S. degrees, as of Spring 2002).
  - Students who have satisfactorily completed two years of a foreign language in high school will be exempt from the 110 college-level course and will be required to complete one additional (120 college-level) course either in the same language or a different language
  - **Foreign language is a very important skill to learn. But at this time the structure of 3 semesters/13 credit hours is too much. The best solution would be eliminating one semester. The two semesters of foreign language do not have to be the same language. Students can have the option of more specialized languages like Italian, Latin, and etc.. The 5 hour courses are too long and hard for commuter students to make time for. The advantage of a 3 hour course is they can be on Tuesday and Thursday. Also, the course has to be structured in an efficient manner with a balance of speech and writing. Students should learn the basic skills of the language and writing.**
  - **Overall students need to know an overview of a language. Even with three semesters of a foreign language students aren't at the level of proficient fluency.**

### **3. Eliminate one course of Biological and Physical Science**

5. Physical and Biological Sciences (**one course, 5 hours minimum**). Every student must complete one lecture course in the physical and/or biological sciences. One of the courses must be a lecture/laboratory combination. Students may select courses from the following departments/areas:
- Chemistry
  - Environmental Science
  - Geography (physical geography only, which includes [150](#), [203](#), [215](#), [314](#), [317](#), [319](#), [335](#), [336](#), [360](#), [401](#), [402](#), [404](#), [406](#), [426](#), [430](#), 435, [442](#), [444](#), [448](#) or [450](#))
  - Geology
  - Natural Science
  - Physical Science
  - Physics
  - Biology

- **Most of the additional Physical / Biological Sciences are offered at inconvenient times and with the lack selection an additional science course is unneeded. Since the admission to UMKC requires a sufficient amount of sciences just the lecture/laboratory combination is necessary.**

### **4. Eliminate Interdisciplinary Cluster Course**

- **This is the second most mentioned class to eliminate besides foreign language. Students feel very strongly that Interdisciplinary Cluster Course provides no long term benefit to their education. The problem is that these courses have very limited perspectives. They are also offered at limited areas and times.**

**The Council recommends eliminating the WEPT and making it conditional for only students who need further direction in writing correctly. The foreign language requirement should be decreased to only two semesters. The Interdisciplinary Cluster Course should be eliminated. One Physical /Biological Sciences course should be eliminated. The number of General Education requirements is reduced from 66 to 53.**

**Overall students want to see a larger selection of courses offered as General Education Requirements. The goal of this survey is to revisit and change the current General Education Requirements. The subcommittee investigating general education requirements should take the largest independent survey into consideration. Thank you to all the students that participated in the survey. Thank you to all the faculty and staff.**