Overview

University

Programs of Study

Courses

Structure and Substance

• Examples of Structure include: Prerequisites (i.e., course sequencing), length of semesters, methods of instruction, and so forth.

• Examples of Substance include components related to the quality of the programs and instruction received based upon faculty created standards.

Faculty Primacy and the Curriculum

AAUP Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities (1966) states:

“The faculty has primary responsibility for such fundamental areas as curriculum, subject matter, and methods of instruction.”

What is a Curriculum Change?

Any change that effects what students should learn or any change in the manner in which learning is produced is considered to be a curricular change.

Defining Curriculum

Frederick Rudolph (1978) in the text Curriculum: A History of the American Undergraduate Course of Study noted:

“the curriculum cannot be understood without paying attention to all the elements that give it life—students, knowledge, teachers, and the courses.... Also the curriculum is both structure and substance....”
ASU Faculty Handbook of Policies and Procedures (2006)

“The faculty has the responsibility … To establish and maintain curricula that meet professional standards and fulfill the educational goals of the University.”

It is the responsibility of the faculty, through several levels of committees, to evaluate and approve new courses and programs.

New programs also require approval by the ASU Board of Trustees and the Arkansas Department of Higher Education.

Role of the College Dean in the Curriculum Approval Process

Responsibility of the Dean: approve or disapprove recommendations forwarded by the College Curriculum Committee. When the dean does not approve they are obligated to advise the committee and the department chair regarding their rationale.

Approved undergraduate changes will be submitted to the University Curriculum Council/Committee (UCC). Those pertaining to graduate curriculum will be sent the Graduate Council (GC).

ASU Faculty Handbook of Policies and Procedures (2006)

• “Academic program curriculum changes originate in the departments and colleges.”

• Undergraduate changes require approval by the Department Curriculum Committee, Department Chair/Program Director, College Curriculum Committee, College Dean and Undergraduate Curriculum Council (UCC) and Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost

• Graduate changes require approval of the Department Graduate Committee, Dean of the College, the Graduate Council, and the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost.

Role of the UCC and GC in the Curriculum Approval Process

The UCC or GC will evaluate proposed changes and make a recommendation to the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost.

Role of Department and College Curriculum Committees

The Department Curriculum Committee works with the Department Chair in developing the curriculum. Changes approved by the department committee and Chair are presented to the College Curriculum Committee.

The College Curriculum Committee evaluates proposed changes submitted by the Departmental Committees and recommends curriculum changes to the Dean.

Advanced Planning is Required

Advanced planning is required to prepare the University bulletins and class schedules. Regular courses may not be taught until they have been published in the University Bulletin.

Special courses and non-degree courses may be taught without inclusion in the bulletin if assigned a special course number and approved by the UCC/Graduate Council and the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost. They may be repeated upon approval of the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost.
Advanced Planning Continued

• Several levels of review and evaluation which take considerable time and energy. Some proposals require back and forth edits and revisions.

• Best Practice: Submit curriculum proposals early in the academic year. The College Curriculum Committee, COPE, UCC, and GC each need more than a week to review proposals prior to their scheduled meeting.

• Note: The UCC and GC typically meet once every 3 or 4 weeks. The UCC has posted deadlines and meeting dates for 2011-2012.

Role of the UCC and Members

ASU Faculty Handbook of Policies and Procedures (2006) states:

“The Primary role of the UCC is to advise the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost about all undergraduate curriculum development within the University. The committee considers individual course proposals, undergraduate bulletin changes, and institutional termination or modification of academic programs.”

Advanced Planning Continued

• Submitting proposals late in the academic year is not advisable! Too frequently we hear: “It is vital that this be done and in place for the start of next year.” If the proposal is truly vital then it needs to be submitted early.

• Proposals should not be submitted during the summer term. The curriculum committees only meet during the 9-month academic year (Aug – May).

UCC Continued

UCC typically uses subcommittees to address the large volume of curriculum proposals. Subcommittee members do not review proposals from their own college however they can address questions and engage in discussion about them. The entire committee of faculty votes on the proposals.

Voting members consist of academic College Curriculum Committee Chairs.

UCC Deadlines 2011-2012

• 9-30-11 Spring Proposals Due to AAR
• 10-28-11 Summer Proposals Due to AAR
• 11-25-11 Fall Proposals Due to AAR
• 1-27-12 Fall Proposals Due to AAR
• 2-24-12 Fall Proposals Due to AAR
• 3-30-12 Fall Proposals Due to AAR

Role of the GC

ASU Faculty Handbook of Policies and Procedures (2006) states:

“The Graduate Council provides guidance and direction for the university’s graduate programs. The Council considers and recommends graduate curriculum changes and new programs ....”

Note: The GC reports to the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost through the Dean of the Graduate School.
GC Members
Membership: 1 tenured graduate faculty member from each college with graduate programs. Colleges with doctoral programs will have an additional faculty representative from that program(s); 2 graduate students appointed by the Graduate Student Council; The Graduate Dean and Director of Assessment will serve on the Council as ex-officio, nonvoting members.

College Dean → COPE or Gen Ed Committee (if Applicable) → UCC or GC → Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs & Research → President (if applicable) → Board of Trustees (if applicable) → ADHE (if applicable)

Curriculum Approval Process
• Involves evaluating proposed changes in: Existing Programs; Development of New Programs; Changes in Content, Level, Credit Hours; Deletion of Old Courses; & Introduction of New Courses.
• Individual faculty members begin the proposal process usually with the assistance of knowledgeable colleagues including the Chair of the Department Curriculum Committee.

Overlap in Faculty Membership
Fortunately, there is generally considerable overlap in the faculty membership of curriculum committees (e.g. Chair of Department Curriculum Committee serves on the College Curriculum Committee and Chair of College Committee serves on UCC). This configuration assists in shepherding proposals through the process.

Department → Chair → College
A proposal must be considered and approved by the Departmental Curriculum Committee followed by Department Chair consideration and approval followed by College Curriculum Committee consideration and approval.

Curriculum Forms
• For the evaluation of curriculum changes to proceed smoothly standardized forms have been developed by AAR.
• Forms are posted on the ASU Web Site.
• Undergraduate Curriculum Forms: go to the A-Z tab, then to Shared Governance, then to Shared Governance Committees UCC.
• http://chancellor.astate.edu/shared_governance/2010-11committees/undergraduate_curriculum_council.html then “UCC click here for: Forms and Instructions”
• Graduate Curriculum Forms - go to the A-Z tab then to Graduate School tab then to Faculty forms “Blank GCC Forms for Faculty”. The graduate school address is: http://www2.astate.edu/u/graduate
Curriculum Forms Continued

- Very important to use the most recent draft of the correct form.
- Although considerable effort has been made to simplify these forms, assistance from the Chair of your Department Curriculum Committee is strongly recommended.
- Very important that you select and use the correct form.

4 Types of Curriculum Forms

1) Bulletin Change Transmittal Form Revised 9/25/2008: Used for making changes in an existing course or program of study. Minor changes that are editorial in nature need this form but not always committee action.

2) New/Special Course Proposal-Bulletin Change Transmittal Form Revised 4/13/10: Used for creating a new course. Special courses have a different numbering system and are intended to be taught only once (but can become a permanent course by resubmission with a regular course number). These courses may be approved with short notice.

Movement of Curriculum Forms

- One hard copy of each completed proposal is required for signatures. Hard copies are submitted to the Chair of the Department Curriculum Committee. An electronic copy is also submitted to the Committee Chair.
- Once reviewed and approved at the department level (i.e. signed by the Department Curriculum Committee Chair and the Department Chair) the Committee Chair forwards hard and electronic copies to the College Curriculum Committee Chair who distributes the electronic copy to the members of the College Curriculum Committee for formal review.

Curriculum Proposal Review & Evaluation

- Committees meet to review and evaluate the proposal/s. Meetings often follow individual review of the proposal/s by the committee members.
- Committees and administrators at any level may question aspects of the documents and call for edits, revisions, etc. Thus, not unusual for the proposal to be tabled and sent back down to the Chair, department, or faculty member for needed changes prior to formal approval.
### Curriculum Proposal Review & Evaluation Continued
- Completed forms are **not** sent prematurely to a higher level until they have been reviewed and approved at the lower levels. This is true in spite of the fact that forms shows a check box for the Graduate Council with the following statement: “Print 1 copy for signatures and send 1 electronic copy to mmcginnis@astate.edu.”

### Avoiding Curriculum Proposal Pitfalls Continued
- Is there a prerequisite?
- Does the Outline possess sufficient detail and is it topical by weeks within the term/semester?
- Is the required reading reference complete?
- If the form asks for a justification, has the submitter actually written a justification?

### Avoiding Curriculum Proposal Pitfalls
- Use the most current posted curriculum form.
- Use the correct form for the proposal.
- If you change a course description and the course is radically different realize it is a new course proposal.
- If you change the level of a course (e.g., 3000 level to 4000 level) it is a new course proposal.
- Minor editorial changes are to be put forth on a Bulletin Change Transmittal Form.

### Avoiding Curriculum Proposal Pitfalls Continued
- Is the primary goal appropriate and well written? (e.g., “Primary Goal Outcome #1: The student will gain knowledge specific to managing international sport venues.”)
- What learning activity will be used to reach this goal? (e.g., “Learning Activity: Instructor lecture and discussion in class, site visit, and professional guest speakers.”)
- What assessment tool will be used to show that students have reached this goal? (e.g., “Assessment Tool: 1) Required written report (SWOT analysis) of overall venue description and operations 2) Oral presentation of report.”)

### Avoiding Curriculum Proposal Pitfalls Continued
- Fill in all of the numbered boxes on the form.
- Does the course description not exceed the maximum length (i.e., 40 words or less)?
- Is the course description well written? (e.g., “Provides a critical perspective of managing international sports venues including planning, design, operations, maintenance, marketing, finance, and event management. Students are exposed to sport venues and management practices in the international sport environment through study abroad.”)

### Avoiding Curriculum Proposal Pitfalls Continued
- When addressing course goals and assessment in curriculum proposals consider the booklet entitled *A Faculty and Staff Guide to Creating Learning Outcomes (2010)* by Galagan, Dingfelder, and Pei published through the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience & Students in Transition and the University of South Carolina.
- Work closely with curriculum committee members and the Committee Chair on formulating course goals and assessment.
- Goals and Assessment are critical in terms of HLC Accreditation.
Avoiding Curriculum Proposal Pitfalls Continued

- Included copies of the appropriate bulletin pages through electronic cutting and pasting on the last page of the form. Show deletions by striking through text, changing font color, and enlarging font size. For additions change font color and enlarging font size.
- List course numbers correctly.
- Group curriculum information in an organized fashion.
- Make sure the numbers of credit hours for various required courses, electives, and options add up correctly.
- Bottom line: Incorrect proposals should not leave the Departmental Curriculum Committee. A proposal with incorrect information should go to the UCC or GC. It is the job of the departmental and college to insure accuracy.
- Semester hour credit should only be awarded for learning opportunities that require academic functioning at a college level.
- The number of credit hours should be consistent with the amount of work or class time involved.
- Avoid proposing courses that already exist in the university curriculum.

Notes

- Dr. David Gilmore, Assistant Professor of Environmental Biology and 2011 Member of the UCC Contributed to the Content of this Presentation.
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