

## **Report of Undergraduate Curriculum Committee actions for academic year 2017-2018 to the Faculty Senate**

The Faculty Senate charged the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UCC) and the Graduate Council (now Graduate Curriculum Committee GCC) to prepare a report regarding means by which the WSU curriculum approval process may be improved or made more efficient.

The end of an academic year is a good time to reflect on the actions of the curriculum committees. This year brought a major change to the curriculum approval process that impacted many people, in that Curriculog was introduced in August 2017 as a new curriculum submission process. Additional changes that impacted the curriculum process on campus were the implementation of Acalog as the University Catalog system, the process by which the information gathered from Curriculog is transferred to Acalog, and master syllabus requirements from Higher Learning Commission (HLC) and the Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE) were asked of the university. Some of these new requirements were included into the curriculum approval process. After a full academic year of using Curriculog it necessitates a review of the system and the curriculum committees that it supports.

### **Curriculog and Acalog**

The Acalog system used for the university catalog has allowed for a more accurate connection of curricular items and the published catalog. This system still requires that new curricular proposals be reviewed by the Office of the Registrar before the final submission to the catalog, however they do not all require retyping, and to that end there have been less errors and the process is becoming more efficient. The data for programs submissions is verified by the process in Curriculog, and Acalog can import information more accurately. In the past if a course title was typed incorrectly that may not have been noticed, however Curriculog and Acalog will flag those errors for further investigation. Curricular items also must be full approved before they appear in the catalog; there is a direct connection between the approval process and the published catalog.

Information in the university catalog that guides the students in their programs and courses is dependent upon the accuracy of the information entered into Curriculog by the originators/submitters of new and modified proposals. That precision allows for a smoother integration of information into the catalog that is more accurate and up to date.

The Office of the Registrar has monitored the Curriculog approval process over the last academic year (since initial implementation), collecting user feedback, monitoring functionality of the forms, and identifying challenges in the integration process. They have identified 32 possible improvements. Many of these are within their control; some may require enhancements by the vendor. The Office of the Registrar will implement changes that are within their control based on the feedback and assessment that has already been completed.

Some of the identified areas of improvement from the Registrar include-

- GPS (Undergraduate Graduation Planning Strategy) form in separate form is cumbersome for review committee and users - pros and cons of including GPS in the original program of study as a separate core so changes can be made in tandem?
- Already approved attributes are not importing properly
- Review and update instructions to provide clarity
- The 'launch' proposal language is confusing to originators ("may not edit the proposal after launch")
- Track changes seem to be lost when a proposal is returned to the department
- Course credit hours display in curriculum schema or preview curriculum
- Consider a "reactivate" option in type of proposal for programs and courses that have been deactivated
- Consider word limit to the course description? There is info in the help text but no enforcement
- Add honors program approval route
- Cross-list functionality for courses is not being utilized

Additional enhancements to the university catalog might also impact Curriculog,

- Address the structure in Acalog - move programs to major, degree with concentrations built as Core within the program

The Office of the Registrar plans to update the curriculum proposal submission forms during summer break for the following academic year in order to reflect the changes and updates identified in the Curriculog system. These updated forms can be the starting point for future continuous improvement efforts and enhanced request prioritization.

It is the opinion of the UCC that the Office of the Registrar has been quite proactive and willing to act in terms of upgrades and modifications to the Curriculog program and the forms. As issues were raised by persons involved with the program, they were handled as quickly as possible, or put on the list for discussion with the vendor and investigation for future updates. The Office of the Registrar has been open and accepting of suggestions from UCC for improvement in the system as the year progressed and the assurance has been put forth that this will continue. The presence of the Registrar's representative at the UCC meetings is a valuable tool as they are often able to check course and program offerings during the meeting and address questions as they arise.

### **Undergraduate Curriculum Committee**

The constitutional charge of the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee is as follows: The committee shall have oversight of all undergraduate curricular items related to courses and programs of study

including bachelor degrees, associate degrees, majors, minors and certificate programs. The committee shall have the responsibility for the following:

- Approval of changes (additions, modifications, deletions) for all undergraduate courses including addition or deletion of course attributes (i.e. Wright State Core, Integrated Writing, Multicultural Competence and Service Learning).
- Approval of modifications to undergraduate programs.
- Keeping abreast of developments in educational pedagogy and facilitating faculty/program adoption of same
- Recommending new programs or program deletions to the Faculty Senate.
- Mediation of undergraduate curricular disputes between academic units.

The UCC members take seriously the responsibility to approve curricular modifications and proposals for new submissions of courses and programs. The group reviews course submissions for accuracy, course attributes, other required elements, and accuracy of the forms in order for the information to be moved into the university catalog completely and effortlessly, and thereby enable students to register for the proper courses they need. For programs, the review for accuracy includes number of credit hours, completion of all required aspects of a program, and confirming that proper forms have been submitted. These reviews ensure that accurate information is being displayed in the university catalog, with consistency, in terms of inclusion of and appearance of required items.

It is important to keep in mind that there is a natural interval of time in having proposals originally submitted and obtaining final approval through UCC. Within the colleges the time frame for approval varies. The amount of time from approval at the Dean's level to appearance at the UCC meeting is dependent on the college adhering to the schedule of submission dates established by the UCC. A full academic year committee schedule containing the meeting dates, agenda item submission dates, and agenda distribution dates is submitted to all UCC members and posted on the UCC website at the beginning of each academic year. The UCC agenda for the monthly meeting is created and distributed to all members one week prior to the scheduled meeting date to allow sufficient time for review of all material prior to the meeting. Proposals received by 5:00 p.m. on the submission cut-off date will be placed on the agenda for review. Due to the volume of proposals and other agenda items scheduled for review it is imperative the timeline on the schedule be followed.

Additionally, new programs or programs with a modification of more than 50% must be submitted to the Faculty Senate for review. Proposals requiring Faculty Senate approval are placed on the Executive Committee agenda at their first meeting post UCC approval. Upon receiving approval from the Executive Committee, the proposal is then forwarded to the Faculty Senate. The Faculty Senate will accept the submission as an item of new business and will continue the review the next month as an item of old business for further discussion. Upon receiving Faculty Senate approval, proposals are then forwarded to the Provost, Board of Trustees, and Ohio Department of Higher Education, and depending on the type of proposal other groups may need to be informed or included in the review process. Due to the lengthy approval process and time constraints, programs that need approval for implementation

in a fall semester must be approved by the UCC at the January meeting prior to the intended fall semester start date. To assist departments with planning and preparation of their prospective proposals, the annual Executive Committee and Faculty Senate Meeting Schedules are posted on their respective websites.

As a reminder, new courses proposed and approved through UCC will be added to the University catalog for Spring and Fall semesters if approved by the cut off dates. Course modifications and deletions will appear in the next published catalog; therefore, committees are approving submissions one year for the next academic year's catalog. Once fully approved through the UCC committee level, courses can be added to the schedule and taught, however they will not be changed immediately in the published current year catalog.

The process for curricular review in 2017-2018 was a changing one due to beginning work in the Curriculog system. Group training sessions were offered by Office of the Registrar to all university colleges during the summer prior to implementation. The UCC members were trained at the university approver level in September. The first semester included a steep learning curve for originators, college level approvers and the UCC committee members as well. The flow of work changed during the semester as more efficient understanding of the system occurred. Colleges learned the system and fewer courses had to be rejected for lack of information. Beginning in October, electronic agendas were distributed to all UCC members a week in advance so that proposals could be double checked prior to the meetings. The UCC developed forms late in October to help members with the review process. At the end of the fall semester more changes were implemented to improve the efficacy of the UCC as peer work groups were established to bring together several colleges to link members with more experience with newer members to assist in modification and review of proposed items from their respective colleges before, and during, the meetings. This extra work taken on by the UCC representatives outside of meeting times reduced the number of courses and programs being returned to the colleges for corrections and additions. Overall, changes have been made as needed through the course of the year.

During the 2017/2018 academic year the UCC met a total of 14 times for at least 2 hours each meeting, rather than the required 8 meeting times. There were 272 course submissions, requiring 323 total reviews - meaning that 51 times proposals were reviewed a second, or third time before they were corrected enough to be approved. There were only 22 courses rejected and 9 were carried over to 2018/19 academic year due to incomplete proposals. Additionally, there were 59 programs, 20 GPS (Graduation Planning Strategy) submissions, and 4 Honors programs reviewed, for a total of 83 submissions. Nine programs had to be held for re-review after corrections were made for a total of 92 reviews. There were 11 rejected after review, (2 by request of the originator) and 6 carried over to the 2018/19 academic year due to incomplete proposals. During meetings, updates were also discussed from HLC, ODHE and WSU Core program and courses, and other curricular related matters such as the Registrar's initiative for pre-requisite checking. In addition, several course waiver requests received from students and advisors were reviewed. It is the opinion of this committee that those waivers should not be coming to UCC, rather should be going to another university entity, and that will be a follow up action item for the coming year. The UCC should be able to spend less time policing the forms being

submitted for accuracy and completeness – counting weekly schedules, adding credits of programs, filling out missing portions of forms – and focus on the attributes of the programs and courses that are required for approval and submission to the university catalog.

The reasons submissions were rejected by UCC in the past year were generally due to the fact that the submission forms were not completed properly, or required information was missing. In some cases, only a course title and prefix were submitted with a prerequisite - the rest of the form was blank. There is not enough information in that type of submission to ensure that the university catalog (Acalog program) is up to date and that the information required for student registration is adequate. Some programs were submitted on the wrong forms or by adding courses incorrectly. Again, these errors caused proposals to take more time through the approval process. In many cases the UCC representatives spent extra time with faculty members from their colleges to work through and help correct items that had been submitted. On occasion the Office of the Registrar helped put program proposals on the proper forms or in the correct format.

The chair and administrative assistant for the committee continues to take time at the end of each academic year to review the activity for the year and consider any needed changes to the process to ensure continuous improvement. This wrap up meeting can include a representative from the Office of the Registrar if needed. Likewise, a planning meeting is held prior to the beginning of the academic year to establish the meeting schedule for the upcoming year as well as any changes to procedures or process. UCC will continue to add any pertinent updates from HLC, ODHE or Curriculog on its website ([www.wright.edu/faculty-senate/committees/undergraduate-curriculum-committee](http://www.wright.edu/faculty-senate/committees/undergraduate-curriculum-committee)) in conjunction with the posting of the approved schedule and activity reports/minutes for each meeting.

The goal of UCC is to continue to maintain the high efficiency of its work in reviewing proposals that will adhere to the charge of the UCC, meet the standard of the Faculty Senate and University policy, and requirements for catalog submissions, while reducing meeting times from 4 hours monthly to once a month for no longer than 2 hours. With proper submission of course and program proposals from the colleges, UCC will be able to review proposals within the scheduled monthly meeting time.

## **Improvement suggestions**

The responsibility of the UCC is to approve curricular modifications and proposals for new submissions to courses and programs. This process includes review for course accuracy of catalog and other required elements, and review for course attributes. For programs, the review for accuracy includes number of credit hours and ensuring that proper forms are being submitted.

This can only be achieved with collaboration with all colleges at all levels, from the submission originator to the College Curriculum Committees, taking responsibility for their work. Administrative responsibility for proper completion of curriculum proposals is being realigned to where it properly belongs.

In order to have this continue in the most efficient way possible the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee would recommend some changes to the groups most involved with the process.

### **Colleges and College Curriculum Committees**

The main way that a smoother quicker curriculum approval process can be achieved is through campus wide involvement. The accountability for proper submissions begins at the college level. College personnel and curriculum committees must honor their responsibility to ensure an accurate submission of these programs and courses. Each College Curriculum Committee should meet on a regular basis and review items submitted from the college. No items should be forwarded to the UCC without having been reviewed fully and approved by the college curriculum committee. The college Dean, or its representative, should ensure that the college committee is a fully functioning group that meets on a regular basis to review proposals.

Submission accuracy – Any new course or program submission, or modifications submitted through Curriculog should be checked for accuracy and completion at every step along the way within the college approval process. The College Curriculum Committee is responsible for the final check of all proposals before the items are forwarded to the UCC. This includes determining that there is no conflict of the content or names of new courses or programs with those currently being offered, and that they are not substantially the same as existing courses or programs being offered within any college. For Programs of Study there should be a check to ensure the form is in the proper order and that the credits for the program are accurate. Proposals found to be wrong in several areas will be rejected from UCC back to the originator for resubmission.

Additionally, colleges should be responsible for developing and maintaining three main pieces of information for courses and programs, required by accreditation bodies and the Ohio Department of Higher Education as follows:

Master syllabus – It is the responsibility of each program, department and/or college to ensure an updated master syllabus is available for each course taught. These must include learning outcomes, a 14-week course schedule with a 15<sup>th</sup> week final exam, outline of course topics and class activities, course materials, grading systems, course evaluations, and any additional completed forms or information required for approval related to specialized course attributes such as WSU Core, Integrated Writing (IW), Service Learning (SL) or Honors. These Master Syllabi should be updated regularly to reflect any updates to the courses as they are taught. These should not be the working syllabi for each course. The repository for Master Syllabi can be determined by each program, department or college.

Working Course Syllabi – Every teacher is responsible for developing the working syllabus for their classes, and a copy of these should be submitted to the program, department or college for retention each semester. These are the full syllabi including the weekly assignments and students' responsibilities.

GPS – Undergraduate Graduation Planning Strategy. This plan outlines a four-year path to graduation which includes: courses, grades, and GPAs as specified. For part-time students and students needing to complete background material, this schedule represents the order in which courses should be taken.

One GPS should be completed for each program of study. However, more than one GPS may be needed for length of study and campus, if sequencing or elective offerings differ. For example - *English, BA (GPS); English, BA (3 yr) (GPS); Liberal Studies, AA (GPS) and Mechanical Engineering, Lake Campus (GPS)*. These must be updated if the Program of Study is modified enough that there will be an impact on the student course scheduling.

The GPS is used for undergraduate academic advising and the UCC does not approve, or monitor these forms for accuracy. In the past year some of these were submitted on the wrong forms and some were incomplete submissions. It should not be a responsibility of the UCC to check these forms, therefore, it is the recommendation of the UCC they should go through the college curriculum committee then directly to the College Advisors or the University Advisors. After the review at that level they can then be forwarded to the Registrar for inclusion in the catalog.

UCC should not have to monitor all program submissions for GPS related submissions, review the proposal and the GPS, count all of the credits required for the degree and double check those with the GPS. This will make the process of program proposals lengthier and may cause a delay in the program approval process. There would be a possibility that a program submitted without a proper GPS would be held for review or rejected at the UCC level, and that could cause it not to be approved in time to appear at the Faculty Senate level for review to be added to the college catalog the following semester and begin admitting students.

### **UCC Representatives**

The representatives from each college to the UCC should be a member of the college curriculum committee. This allows for a smoother transfer of information from the college level to the UCC and allows for information to return to the college in a timely manner such as updates from HLC, ODHE or Curriculog. Additionally, a familiarity with the programs within their college is necessary so that any new programs or courses proposed to the UCC that overlap significantly with current offerings in another college can be discussed by the committee.

Representatives should be named before the end of spring semester for the following year so that any needed training or preparation can take place before fall semester begins. This will also correspond with the time for Faculty Senate populating the UCC.

College representatives to the UCC will ensure their college submissions are correct, understand modifications for each submission and the rationale behind the change, and be prepared to speak on behalf of their college at the UCC meeting. They will follow up on any corrections found at UCC level

with the members of their college. The College reps should also be making note of any pertinent announcements or discussions during the UCC meetings and taking that back to their respective colleges. This will help all colleges receive information related to curricular issues in a timely manner. Likewise, they should be sure that every department within the college is aware who the representative is for the UCC committee so they can be contacted in case of questions or concerns with a proposal.

### **Undergraduate Curriculum Committee**

Curriculog currently adds notations to the comment section when a course or program is approved or rejected. Each time a proposal is reviewed UCC will convey the status of each course or program by adding a comment to the Curriculog form. This process allows originators and other interested persons to follow the time line of activity on all submissions.

UCC will continue to work with the Office of the Registrar to update the Curriculog forms by identifying areas that could be eliminated or enhanced to improve the efficiency of the submission process. Continued meetings also identify any errors that were made in the previous year when reviewing submissions and discussing new changes across campus that will impact the work of the committee as a whole – pre-requisite checking, campus realignment.

The UCC will work with Faculty Senate and Undergraduate Academic Policy committee to determine the appropriate path for course waiver requests.

### **Office of the Registrar**

As the central body responsible for the Curriculog program, the Office of the Registrar will continue to maintain and update Curriculog as needed, import courses and programs to the University catalog, work with the UCC to field any other recommendations for improvement to the program, and report these changes back to the curriculum committees.

Now that the initial year of implementation is complete and some have spent extensive time working in the program, other issues have come to light. In this preliminary use of the program the focus has been on the original submission of proposals, so now there is a need to address the review process, the steps therein and the production of reports. Some thoughts are:

- Are the proper people being notified of courses and programs? Honors, IW, SL.
- Generating specific reports, such as type of proposals (new, modified, 50% change), or those requiring Faculty Senate approval.
- Printing Agendas that shows the decisions made and not print each course proposal in its entirety.

Ongoing training is vital, and should be an annual occurrence, due to the fact that personnel changes across campus, and to refresh the memories of others working with the system.



## **Future Considerations**

There are other areas that would enhance the productivity of the UCC and allow for a smoother approval process overall. Following are some areas that could be discussed to see how they could be of help to not just the UCC but to the greater university community.

**GPS** - (Undergraduate Graduation Planning Strategy) At this point it is unclear who is truly accountable for this form. Should the proposal be linked in Curriculog directly to the POS or is the separate form appropriate? Who is responsible to ensure these are submitted? Who is responsible for accuracy of the form? These questions require further discussion to develop a system that meets the needs of academic advising, the students involved in the program and the State of Ohio department of Higher Education, without the burden falling to the UCC who is not truly involved in the process. This needs to be the responsibility of the subject matter experts, and that appears to be the programs, departments, colleges, and academic counselors. The UCC recognizes the importance of the GPS and continuing to have it updated with each program modification that may impact a student's schedule of courses, however in the past year adding the GPS approval route to the UCC increased the program review workload by 25%.

**University Master Syllabus** – It is recommended that the university adopt a standard Master syllabus form that corresponds to the Curriculog and University Catalog (Acalog) requirements. This would be a skeleton form with basic required areas that would include all items required for submission of a new or modified course within Curriculog and could follow the items in order as they appear on the submission forms. There should be explanations of all required items and any limitations mentioned, for example, 14-week academic schedule with a finals week, length of Catalog Description, difference between a course description and a catalog description, course attribute information – IW, MC etc. Utilizing a common master syllabus across campus will allow for consistency in the appearance of items for the university catalog. Having Master Syllabi that are completed fully before a course was proposed or modified, will streamline the submission process by allowing originators to input items into the Curriculog program more efficiently. Approvers can review the master syllabus of any course quickly because all master syllabi will have the same structure. These would then also fulfill the HLC requirement of having updated master syllabi for every course on campus.

**Credit hour tracking** – Per University Policy 4002.1 "Student learning outcomes for a course, and the approximate amount of student effort/time for a typical student required to meet those objectives, shall be reasonably equivalent regardless of the instructor or the modality of instruction used. The Faculty is responsible for the communication of course learning outcomes, clearly communicating the goals of unsupervised learning effort/time (homework) and assessing the achievement of individual student mastery of the course learning outcomes. Every course offering is expected to have approximately equivalent student learning outcome goals and to require approximately the same amount of student

effort, regardless of the particular instructor of record or the modality of instruction". This means that each course should have a weekly time plan for each mode of course delivery - Face to Face, Online, Hybrid. These will be housed with the master syllabus and kept up to date. The information is required by The Higher Learning Commission (HLC), the university's accrediting body. This requirement was added with no guidance as to how this should be accomplished. A template has been developed that seems to meet the requirements of HLC for the university community to use but it is unclear if a form is required. This item needs to be clarified and decisions made as to what is actually needed for the accreditation body and how that should appear. This should be the responsibility of the programs, departments and colleges to maintain this information.

**Curriculog form** - What is truly required on the program and course submission forms? It is recognized that there are items that may not be necessary. However, who approves the inclusion or deletion of items on the forms? Can this be a working group of UCC, Graduate Curriculum Committee and Registrar members? Does there need to be input from a representative from the Office of the Provost? If the form can be simplified by removing any elements, that may streamline the submission process for new and modified courses and programs.

In closing, the UCC, and the Registrar have been working diligently to approve programs and course submissions and will continue to carry out this function as efficiently as possible. This ongoing relationship enables us to recognize and improve any issues or concerns that may arise.

The Office of the Registrar has been working with the college community to adapt the new programs, Curriculog for curriculum and Acalog for the university catalog, to meet the needs of the university and the colleges, and continues to be open to working with the UCC to meet the needs of those groups.

UCC will continue to work with the college curriculum committees as courses and programs are proposed that meet the needs of the students, while adhering to university policies and the charge given to them by the Faculty Senate.

College personnel and curriculum committees must ensure an accurate submission of program and course proposals, and this will support the work of UCC by allowing them to focus on the task of approval, not corrections of proposals.

This ongoing collaboration of UCC, the Office of the Registrar and the colleges will facilitate the common goal of transforming the lives of our students and the communities we serve.

Respectfully submitted  
Barbara Dunaway  
UCC chair