

## An Effective Curriculum Processes Primer

Approved October 1, 2016 by the ASCCC Executive Committee

In an effort to assist curriculum committees, faculty, and other stakeholders, this document suggests effective practices for streamlining the local curriculum approval process. All of the information in this document comes from the ASCCC paper *Ensuring Effective Curriculum Approval Processes*; we strongly encourage reading that document in conjunction with using this list.

### Review Curriculum Processes:

If your college curriculum approval process takes more than 3 months from submission to the Curriculum Committee to action by the Governing Board, your academic senate might consider leading a review of the process to identify practices to make the curriculum approval process more efficient and effective.

### Stage 1 - Identify Needed Changes:

- Identify unnecessary/redundant steps, relative to what is required by title 5. Could steps be eliminated without unintended consequences?
- Identify steps that could be done simultaneously
- Identify technology-related issues that may be impacting curriculum approval.
- Determine if there is too much focus on compliance and bureaucratic details that hinder curriculum approval, regardless of the quality of proposals.

### Stage 2 - Implement Changes to Accomplish the Following:

1. Make sure the process for initiating curriculum is clear
  - Effective practices to consider:
    - Handbook - Create/revise comprehensive curriculum handbook
    - Calendar/flow chart - Create a curriculum calendar or a process flow chart that clearly presents important due dates and illustrates the process from initiation to approval.
    - Website - Create a curriculum website that allows easy access to local, district, and statewide curriculum resources.
2. Make sure the technical review process is streamlined and effective
  - Effective practices to consider:
    - Screen proposals - Have curriculum committee members help faculty by screening curriculum submissions for completeness before full technical review occurs.
    - Simultaneous curriculum development and technical review - Make technical review simultaneous with curriculum proposal development.
    - Technical review expertise - Limit the technical review committee to the most critical individuals and allow them to conduct their review simultaneously rather than sequentially.
    - Expedite technical review for minor changes - Allow minor changes to courses and programs to undergo an expedited or streamlined technical review, based on locally established criteria, rather than a full technical review.
3. Make sure curriculum committee meetings are run efficiently.
  - Effective practices to consider:
    - Be organized - Prepare a well-organized agenda that includes the pertinent information.
    - Delegate work - Assign several curriculum committee members to each proposal as readers that will provide prepared responses to the curriculum developers.

- Consent agendas - Use a consent agenda for non-substantive changes to curriculum.
  - Thorough review early - Engage in detailed review of new curriculum during first readings and use consent calendars for approval at the second reading.
  - Required changes for CTE - Allow CTE proposals that are the result of statutory or external accreditation requirements to be approved at first reading by the curriculum committee.
  - Access to Curriculum Management System - Give curriculum committee members access to the curriculum management system, allowing them to make reviewer comments prior to the first reading.
  - Minor edits/errors outside of committee meetings - Handle minor edits outside of meetings by sending typographical and other minor errors to the curriculum chair or designee for correction
4. Streamline the approval process.
- Effective practices to consider:
    - Delegate authority to the curriculum committee - Give curriculum committees full authority to make recommendations directly to the governing board without intermediate approval steps
    - Grant the curriculum committee authority to approve locally defined non-substantive changes to courses and programs without any additional local approvals.
    - Limit required board approvals - Limit curriculum submissions to the governing board to approval of new courses and programs.
    - Regional consortium submission - Submit new CTE program proposals to the regional consortium prior to or simultaneously with submission to the curriculum committee for local program approval and prior to submission to the governing board.<sup>1</sup>
    - Expedited technical review for certain revisions - Expedite technical review for course revisions that only involve changes to certain course attributes or for changes to courses and programs that are required by statute or external accreditation.
    - Adopting existing courses in multi-college districts - For multi-college districts, consider giving college curriculum committees the authority to grant final approval for adoption of courses at one college that already exist within the district.
5. Consider giving colleges in multi-college districts autonomy over their curriculum
- Effective practices to consider:
    - Eliminate district-wide approval or requirements for achieving consensus among the colleges in the district.
    - College autonomy - Give each college in the district full autonomy over its curriculum, including attributes such as units and contact hours.
    - Flexibility of curriculum alignment - If alignment of curriculum is a concern, use C-ID or articulation agreements as means to ensure a measure of alignment of curriculum rather than using rigid district-wide alignment requirements.

---

<sup>1</sup> Regional consortia establish their own procedures for submission and review of new program proposals. Be sure to check the requirements of the regional consortium to determine if it does allow submissions of proposals prior to local curriculum committee or governing board approval.