

**UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION TO AMEND
FACULTY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES 4.20., 4.32., 4.40. and 5.31.
REGARDING PROCESSES FOR APPROVING, MODIFYING AND DISCONTINUING
COURSES; AND TO AMEND CHAPTER 6 TO CREATE THE
UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM COMMITTEE**

Background

UW-Madison *Faculty Policies and Procedures* 4.20., 4.32., 4.40., and 5.31. define the process for approving new credit courses, or for modifications of or discontinuation of existing credit courses:

http://www.secfac.wisc.edu/governance/FPP/Chapter_4.htm#420

http://www.secfac.wisc.edu/governance/FPP/Chapter_4.htm#432

http://www.secfac.wisc.edu/governance/FPP/Chapter_4.htm#440

http://www.secfac.wisc.edu/governance/FPP/Chapter_5.htm#531

FPP Chapter 6 lists the committees of the faculty and outlines the policies and procedures related to those committees:

http://www.secfac.wisc.edu/governance/FPP/Chapter_6.htm

In June 2012, the University Committee, with the support of the leadership of the four divisional executive committees, established an ad hoc interdivisional curriculum committee. The ad hoc committee was charged with reviewing course proposals across the four faculty divisions and recommending whether a standing University Curriculum Committee should be established.

Prior to June 2012, the four divisional executive committees were responsible for course approval, as outlined in *FPP* Chapter 4. Each approached the course proposal review differently. In the arts and humanities, physical sciences and social studies divisions, one divisional executive committee provided both tenure review and course review. In the biological sciences division, these responsibilities were divided between two distinct committees: the biological sciences curriculum planning committee and the biological sciences tenure committee.

Prior to June 2012, concerns were raised about the structure of the course approval process. Many, but not all, of these concerns were exclusive to the three divisional committees that conducted both course review and tenure review.

- Course review and tenure review are both time-consuming. Given limited time, divisional committee members may have given priority to the tenure review. Subsequently, the quality of course review may have suffered.
- Some members were motivated to serve on the divisional committee in order to conduct tenure review and were not interested in course review.
- Former Interim Chancellor David Ward, from his perspective of the implementation of the Educational Innovation initiative, observed that the course approval process was cumbersome. For example, departments would find it beneficial to have course proposal deadlines be closer to the meeting dates. Prior to 2012, deadlines (including for course proposals) were three weeks before the meetings in order to allow committee members time to review tenure dossiers.
- Some divisional committee members expressed that they did not have the proper expertise in curriculum matters to adequately review course proposals and that the pre-2012 model did not allow time for proper training related to course review.

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- Divisional committees lacked a clear mandate for their role in the course approval process. This had multiple consequences:
 - Because the various divisional committees had a different understanding of their roles in the course approval process, there were different standards for review. This was particularly difficult for departments that submitted proposals for review by multiple divisional committees.
 - Some committee members were unsure of how to review course proposals. As a result, some proposals may not have received adequate review while other proposals may have been overly scrutinized. Committee members may have needlessly spent time dealing with issues that were outside their jurisdiction.
- It was difficult to update the documents and procedures related to the course approval process, as all four divisional executive committees had to be consulted separately.
- A single university curriculum committee could take on new responsibilities and advisory capacities related to campus-wide curriculum issues and address better the interdisciplinary nature of courses.

Recommendation

The ad hoc interdivisional curriculum committee and all four divisional executive committees have voted unanimously to approve the proposed changes to *FPP* 4.20., 4.32. and Chapter 6, which move the course approval process from the divisional executive committees to a new committee, the University Curriculum Committee. They have voted to eliminate the interdivisional conference committee (*FPP* 4.40.), which is made unnecessary upon the establishment of a University Curriculum Committee. Finally, they have voted to approve the proposed change to *FPP* 5.31.G., which aligns the procedures for course approval with the proposed changes to *FPP* 4.20., 4.32. and Chapter 6. The proposed revision to *FPP* 5.31.G. also reflects a change that was approved by the dean of each school/college in 2011: to delegate the dean's action to the school/college curriculum committee or equivalent. The proposed changes were prepared by the ad hoc interdivisional curriculum committee.

The current divisional structure was established in the 1940s when the university was expanding rapidly and benefitted from structures to accommodate this growth. For tenure review, the divisional structure continues to serve the university well. For the purpose of course review, particularly as more and more issues related to courses and the curriculum cross disciplinary lines, separate divisional structures may not be the best way to serve the university nor its students, particularly in the current environment of resource constraints and program accountability.

Based on the experience of the ad hoc interdivisional curriculum committee, establishing a standing University Curriculum Committee would:

- By creating a committee that is independent of the tenure review schedule, allow flexibility in scheduling meetings and deadlines to align with campus course needs
- Allow committee members to devote sufficient time to review proposals
- Provide time to train thoroughly committee members on the course approval process
- Allow a dedicated group of faculty to devote time to understanding their mandate in the course approval process
- Create a single standard for university-level review of course proposals
- By working with the full array of courses across campus, allow committee members to see patterns in course proposals, consider proposals in a broader context, and recognize curricular disconnects

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- By creating a committee that has expertise about the course approval process, increase the efficiency of that process
- Facilitate interaction between the University Academic Planning Council, where planning takes place, and the University Curriculum Committee, which would base its course review on that planning
- Create a venue that encourages communication among schools and colleges and addresses whether sufficient attention has been paid to issues that are cross-college in nature
- Provide a campus-wide venue to respond to curricular issues such as educational innovation, distance learning, Course Guide, etc.
- Allow members of the existing divisional committees to focus attention on tenure review and providing advice on educational policy and planning, as stipulated in *FPP* 4.20.

The University Committee recommends approval of the proposed revisions.

Proposed Revisions

4.20. DIVISIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES: FUNCTIONS.

- ~~A. APPROVAL OF COURSES. Departments shall submit proposals for new credit courses, or for modifications of existing credit courses, to the appropriate divisional executive committee. If the executive committee approves, the proposal is then submitted to the appropriate dean for final action.~~
- ~~B. REVIEW OF COURSE OFFERINGS. Executive committees may review and recommend the alteration or discontinuance of existing credit courses, and the establishment of interdepartmental, divisional, or interdivisional courses.~~
- EA. ADVICE ON TENURE APPOINTMENTS.** Before appointment or promotion to a position on the tenured faculty is made, the dean shall ask the advice of the appropriate divisional executive committee. The only exception to this requirement is when there is a lapse of less than two years from the time of a previous offer with tenure or resignation from the tenured faculty. (Procedures are described in Chapter 7 of these rules.)
- EB. ADVICE ON OTHER PERSONNEL PROBLEMS.** A chancellor, dean, or department may ask the advice of the appropriate divisional executive committee concerning other personnel problems. The committee may study and make recommendations regarding appointments in order to strengthen the faculty and academic programs.
- EC. CRITERIA FOR ADVICE.** Executive committees shall establish criteria for considering personnel matters referred to them. (Criteria for promotion and retention are set forth in Chapter 7 of these rules.)
- ~~F. ADVICE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY AND PLANNING. On their own initiative or on request, divisional executive committees may advise the chancellor, deans, or other administrative officers of the university on educational policy and planning and their implementation.~~
- ED. ADVICE ON COMMITTEE SELECTION.** The faculty or the chancellor may request executive committees to nominate or appoint persons from their divisions to standing or *ad hoc* committees.

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4.32. DIVISIONAL ACADEMIC PLANNING.

- A. PROCEDURES. Each division may establish a mechanism for divisional participation in academic planning to consider, as appropriate to the division, matters of academic planning that involve more than one school or college.
- B. ESTABLISHMENT. A divisional executive committee ~~which that~~ chooses to develop a proposal under this section shall submit that proposal to the University Committee for approval. Should the proposed mechanism require any changes to *Faculty Policies and Procedures*, the divisional executive committee shall propose the necessary changes to the University Committee for review and then to the senate for approval. The mechanism developed by each division and approved by the University Committee shall be reported to the senate for information, and a record thereof shall be maintained by the secretary of the faculty.
- C. GENERAL PROVISIONS. A mechanism established by a division under this section shall provide for a committee or other body, at least two-thirds of the voting members of which shall be faculty without significant administrative appointments above the departmental level and who are elected by the divisional faculty. The committee or body will provide advice to the provost and appropriate deans and will work with school or college academic planning councils on matters of common interest.

~~4.40. INTERDIVISIONAL CONFERENCE COMMITTEE.~~

- ~~A. MEMBERSHIP. The committee will be composed of eight members selected by and from the existing divisional executive committees. A member of the committee may ask any member of his/her divisional committee to serve as his/her alternate at any meeting of the committee.~~
- ~~B. FUNCTIONS. The purpose and function of the committee shall be:
 - ~~1. To review all interdisciplinary course proposals submitted to it and take one of the following actions:
 - ~~a. Determine that the course fits within the province of one division and refer it to that divisional executive committee; or~~
 - ~~b. Determine that the course is truly interdivisional and either refer it to the appropriate divisional executive committees, with or without a recommendation to them, or itself make a recommendation to the chancellor and dean(s) concerning the course.~~~~
 - ~~2. Any member of the committee or any divisional chair may ask the committee to delay action on a course proposal until his/her divisional executive committee has had time to review the proposal and make a recommendation. Such requests must be honored.~~
 - ~~3. In the event that two or more divisional committees have acted on an interdivisional course proposal and their actions differ, the committee will review these actions and make a recommendation to the chancellor and dean(s) as to what course of action should be followed. The recommendations of the divisional committees will also be forwarded to the chancellor and dean(s).~~~~

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- ~~4. The agenda of committee meetings will be circulated to all members of each divisional committee, and the materials for the meeting will be circulated to each divisional chair and be available to each member of the divisional committees.~~
- ~~5. The committee may receive course proposals from:
 - ~~a. Any body with the authority to make course proposals, believing that the course concerns matters beyond the jurisdiction of any single divisional executive committee.~~
 - ~~b. A divisional executive committee that believes a course proposal submitted to it concerns matters beyond its jurisdiction. The divisional committee may transmit the proposal to the committee with or without a recommendation as to the action to be taken.~~~~
- ~~6. Any divisional chair or member of the committee may request the committee to take up any item that appears to be interdivisional in scope.~~
- ~~7. The committee's functions shall not include recommendations on personnel.~~

5.31. DEPARTMENTAL CHAIR: DUTIES

The chair of the department has the following duties:

- G. Submits new courses, major revisions of existing courses, and deletion of courses proposed by the department for action by the ~~divisional executive committee and by the dean~~ school/college and the University Curriculum Committee.

6.53. UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM COMMITTEE.

- A. MEMBERSHIP. The committee shall consist of 12 faculty members, three from each faculty division. Members shall serve three-year terms, which shall be staggered. The Committee on Committees shall give consideration to appointing members who have recently served on their college or school curriculum committee.
- B. FUNCTIONS.
 1. APPROVAL OF COURSES. Proposals for new credit courses, or for modifications of or discontinuation of existing credit courses, shall be approved by the department (or department-like body), then by the school or college, and finally by the University Curriculum Committee.
 2. REVIEW OF COURSE OFFERINGS. The University Curriculum Committee may review and recommend the alteration or discontinuance of existing credit courses, and the establishment of new courses.
 3. ADVICE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY AND PLANNING. On its own initiative or on request, the University Curriculum Committee may advise the chancellor, provost, deans, or other administrative officers of the university on educational policy and planning and their implementation.