A Chair’s Guide to the CAS/GRS Curriculum Review Process
2006/2007

The following materials are posted at http://www.bu.edu/cas/adminnet/curriculum:

1. blank course approval form and sample completed course approval forms
2. checklist for syllabus preparation
3. cognate comment form
4. Stage I and II forms for new degree proposals (with guidelines for completion)

At the Department Level:
All proposals should be reviewed (for form and content) in the department before submission to the College, and should bear the chairman’s signature (or, when cross-listing is proposed, the signatures of both chairmen). Many departments have their own formal curriculum committees, ensuring collegial attention to the “fit” of proposed new courses within the overall curriculum; others look to their College curriculum rep and/or to the Senior Associate Dean for guidance in the development of approvable proposals. Susan Jackson is available throughout the year for soup-to-nuts consultation, which is especially recommended for those contemplating new programs or program revisions.

Cognate comment should be secured from the chairman of any intellectually neighboring department or program a) that should be heard on questions of potential overlap/duplication, b) whose expertise might contribute to improvement of the proposal, c) that is primarily responsible for courses listed as part of an interdisciplinary program, or d) whose faculty and students will derive particular benefit from advance notice of your new initiative. Cognate comment (not approval or disapproval) cannot single-handedly sink a proposal: in the event of unresolved differences between departments, cognate comment would inform, but not dictate, the College committees’ decisions. In practice, departments invariably resolve such disagreements among themselves.

At the College Level:
Curricular review is conducted, in stages, by some combination of the following:
—three Curriculum Committees, known as the HUCC, SSCC, and NSCC, each of which focuses on a single division of the arts and sciences curriculum: Humanities; Social Sciences; or Natural Sciences (including Mathematics and Computer Science)
—-the Academic Policy Committee (APC), which, in addition to ranging across the curriculum with particular attention to basic requirements for the B.A., considers such changes to College policy as, in recent years, revision of the Academic Conduct Code —-the full CAS/GRS Faculty

Faculty membership on the Curriculum Committees:
Each department is represented (by one member) on the committee(s) for the curricular division(s) of its degree programs. Reps are appointed by their Chairs for 3-year terms.
By July 31, Chair lets Dean Jackson know which colleague has agreed to replace any rep whose term has expired or who is unable to serve in the coming year (e.g., on LOA).
Service on a curriculum committee is important and not terribly onerous; it provides an excellent opportunity to meet, and “talk shop” with, colleagues in related disciplines.

Faculty membership on the Academic Policy Committee
The APC’s nine faculty members are elected by the full faculty to staggered three-year terms. A ballot circulated each April/May supplements individual nominations with those of the Nominating Committee.

Respective Purviews of the Curriculum Committees, APC, and Faculty:

Curriculum Committees (CC’s) are first to review nearly everything: new course proposals, revisions to existing courses, requests for Divisional Studies status, new degree program proposals, and revisions to existing
CC’s approval is final in the case of revisions to all individual courses except those that currently carry Divisional Studies status or for which that status is sought.

CC endorsement is necessary and sufficient for proposed new courses to be placed on the agenda for the next meeting of the full CAS/GRS faculty.

CC endorsement is also required on requests for the Dean’s “one-shot” or “provisional” approval of proposed new courses. (Such requests can usually be avoided by timely submission of proposals, and are entertained only when a new course must be added to the class schedule earlier than the next full Faculty Meeting. There is no such thing as one-shot program approval or o-s Divisional Studies status.)

CC’s advise the APC on proposals for Divisional Studies status, new degree programs, and revisions to existing programs.

**Tip:** To save back and forth, any proposal that will eventually be reviewed by the APC can be internally addressed from the outset—even though it will be delivered to Lawrie Donovan and first reviewed by a curriculum committee--to the Academic Policy Committee.

**APC** reviews all proposals except those to revise existing non-Divisional courses.

APC’s decision to grant (or deny, or renew) Divisional Studies status is final.

APC’s recommendation is necessary and sufficient for proposed new programs and revisions to existing programs to be placed on the agenda for the next Faculty Meeting.

**Full faculty (FF)** reviews proposals for new courses, and for new and revised programs.

Approval is final in the case of new courses and minors, and revised degree programs.

Faculty’s endorsement is necessary and sufficient for University-level review of proposed new degree programs, via Stage I and Stage II Proposals.

**At the University Level:**

Following faculty approval in the College, proposals for new degree programs are reviewed by University committees and finally approved by the Board of Trustees. For that reason, approval of new programs typically takes up to two academic years. No new program should be advertised, or recruit students, before it is finally approved.

**Summary:**

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**Schedule of Curriculum, APC, Faculty Meetings**

A one-page semester calendar of meetings of the Curriculum Committees (HUCC, NSCC, SSCOCC), Academic Policy Committee (APC), and full CAS/GRS Faculty is mailed at the beginning of each semester to Chairs, Department Administrators, and departmental representatives to curriculum committees, along with a complete roster of curriculum committee members and their contact information.

**Each curriculum committee meets, at two-week intervals,** an average of seven times each semester. Meeting day/time changes each semester to accommodate members' teaching schedules. Meetings may be cancelled or added in response to ebb and flow of business. The committees do not meet in the summer.

**The APC meets monthly** from September through April on the third or fourth Wednesday of the month, at 4 p.m.

**Final deadline for submission of proposals to curriculum committees and APC** is one week prior to scheduled meeting.

Out of respect for faculty committees and in the interest of expediting review, proposals that would surely be tabled (because they are incomplete, ambiguous, or at odds with established policies and practices of the
College) are not placed on the pertinent meeting agenda until these problems—as communicated to designated departmental contact person by Lawrie Donovan or Susan Jackson—have been resolved.

**The Faculty** usually gathers three times a year (in November, March, and April) for meetings where reports are heard from the APC and curriculum committees. All Faculty Meetings are held on a Wednesday at 4 p.m. in CAS 522 and are preceded by a sherry “hour” beginning at 3:00 p.m. in Dean Henderson’s office. Faculty meeting agenda are distributed to departments and posted on the Web one week to ten days before meetings. Descriptions of individual courses under consideration are also posted on the Web in advance of meetings. Full proposals are available for review in CAS 106.

**Rules of thumb:**
Proposals aiming for inclusion on the November Faculty Meeting agenda should be submitted by the first week in October at the latest. Earlier is better to allow for the possibility of emendation in response to questions, concerns, and suggestions from the curriculum committee and, where prior review by APC is also required, the APC.
Likewise, realistic drop deadlines for March and April Faculty Meetings are likely to be early February and early March, respectively.
Special attention should be paid to the mentoring of newly hired faculty members from whom you are expecting additions to the curriculum. They will need help with knowing, and meeting, College expectations in course and syllabus design.
Don’t neglect to consider discontinuation of moribund courses and programs: it is a condition of the University’s accreditation that no course be listed in the *Bulletin* that will not have been taught for three consecutive years.