Undergraduate Curriculum Approval Process

The following curriculum approval process is applicable to all courses and programs in associate degree and baccalaureate program offerings, including bachelor's degree programs, associate degree programs, certificates, majors, minors or concentrations.

Stages of the Curriculum Approval Process: The **stages of the curriculum approval process** are:

1. Faculty, who will submit proposals with consent of their department or program
2. departments and schools led by their chairpersons, and interdisciplinary programs led by their coordinators/directors
3. Area Curriculum Committees (ACCs) and/or Teacher Education Council (TEC)
4. the Undergraduate Course and Program Review Committee (UCPRC)
5. Faculty Senate
6. President or designee
7. In some instances: Council of Trustees and PASSHE.

Area Curriculum Committees (ACCs) and the Undergraduate Course and Program Review Committee (UCPRC) are subcommittees of the Faculty Senate. The Faculty Senate is designated as the University Curriculum Committee by APSCUF-MU.

Deadlines and Expected Timeline: It is intended that the **length of time** required to approve a proposal requiring no revisions through all levels of the approval sequence up to and including Faculty Senate should be no more than sixty (60) days following dissemination (see Step 3, below). The deadline for submitting a proposal for review will be the 14th week of the Spring semester. Curriculum approval is conducted only during the regular meeting schedule of the curricular review bodies. Official University breaks do not count toward the goal of a sixty-day turnaround.

Scope of Curricular Approval: The **curriculum approvals** covered in this process include:

- the addition of all new courses;
- the addition of all new programs including majors, minors, certificates and concentrations,
- the addition or removal of specific General Education designations to or from an existing course;
- changes to any existing course;
- changes to any existing program within a department, school or interdisciplinary program.

Distance Learning proposals are covered in a separate policy respecting their special status in the APSCUF Collective Bargaining Agreement and have a different route to approval. However, to the degree possible, the workflow is integrated into the same system.

Notification of proposed curricular changes: During the curriculum approval process:

- Faculty will be advised of curricular proposals by their department chairperson, by their Faculty Senator, by their representatives on Area Curriculum Committees, and by notification through the electronic proposal management system.
- The proposal displayed online in the electronic proposal management system will always be the latest version, with proposal status and recent edits clearly indicated.
- Area Curriculum Committees (ACCs) will facilitate inter-departmental communication about proposed curricular changes.

Step 1: Preparation of the Proposal

Proposers and Proposals: The proposer is the faculty member who composes the proposal and submits it to his/her department or school chairperson and (if appropriate) interdisciplinary program coordinator/director to begin the review process. When several faculty members cooperate to prepare a proposal, one faculty member will be designated as the proposer. The electronic curriculum approval system will allow the proposer to share viewing and edited privileges with other faculty. It is the responsibility of proposer to secure department, school or interdisciplinary committee assent prior to submitting a proposal for review. .

Access to the proposal submission forms is through the Curriculum Approval Process (CAP) website. If the proposer needs help in completing the form, the best resource person is the representative for his or her department or school on the primary curriculum committee (see Step 3, below).

Decanal Analysis: Each proposals will include a Resource Analysis (or Decanal Analysis), conducted by the appropriate College Dean's Office. This Decanal Analysis does not have any bearing on the outcome of the curriculum review process until proposals reach the President or designee (see Step 6, below). However, proposals must include a Resource Guide which will be used by the Dean to inform the Decanal analysis (see Step 1, below).

Special Curriculum Considerations: The following course rules create special tasks or considerations for curriculum proposals.

Course Descriptions

Each course description shall include statements of the number and type of class meeting hours per week, and of which semester(s) the course is normally offered.

Experimental Courses

To encourage experimentation and to provide timely courses in a variety of areas, departments are permitted to offer two (2) experimental courses per school year.

All experimental courses will be designated with a course number ending in "79." Experimental courses may not count in General Education nor carry writing, community and cultural diversity, or perspectives designations. However, as part of the approval process for new courses, a department may request that a new course originally offered on an experimental basis count retroactively as General Education and/or with a specific designation.

New Credentialed Programs

The proposal of any new credential (degree, major, concentration, minor, certificate, or similar program) must begin by submitting a Notice of Intent (NOI) to the appropriate department chair(s) and college Dean(s). The NOI is for information only (there is no formal review and approval). It allows the Dean to provide preliminary feedback on the resource implications of the proposal and allows the President or designee to guide the progress of the proposal through the various stages of review, including any required PASSHE review

Interdisciplinary Courses and Programs

"Interdisciplinary courses" include the following categories: 1) courses that reflect inter-relationships among two or more disciplines, 2) Perspectives courses with interdisciplinary content, 3) courses cross-listed by two or more departments, or 4) divisional courses as provided and defined in the University Course Identification policy.

"Interdisciplinary programs" are minors or majors for which the list of required courses includes courses from more than one department or school, and must adhere to the University Interdisciplinary Programs policy.

In proposing interdisciplinary courses and programs, any departments or school significantly involved or affected will be consulted by the proposer. The results of such consultation, in the form of letters of support or objection, shall be included with the course or program proposal.

Step 2: Department, School and Interdisciplinary Program Reviews

Representation: Departments and schools are represented on one or more Area Curriculum Committees (ACCs) as defined by the University Area Curriculum Committees policy. The faculty member(s) chosen by a department or school to serve on the ACC(s) and TEC will serve as their department's or school's resource person on matters of curriculum revision procedures. Interdisciplinary program committees, led by a coordinator/director, include members from multiple departments and/or schools, so each committee member has representation on at least one ACC. Interdisciplinary programs that are not housed within one department or school are represented on the Council of Interdisciplinary Coordinators, which has representation at Faculty Senate. Thus, interdisciplinary programs have multiple pathways to representation at higher levels of the approval process.

Proposal Review: A proposal will be submitted for review by a faculty member (see Step 1, above), with the assent of their department, school and/or interdisciplinary program committee. The chairperson of the originating department, school, or interdisciplinary program will ensure that the proposer, Faculty Senator and ACC representative(s) of that department or school know the purpose and details of the proposal before it is disseminated for campus review. The chairperson will indicate recommendation of the proposal, and will initiate the process of disseminating the proposal (Step 3, below) for campus review.

Administration Proposals. The university administration may initiate a curricular proposal for review by the faculty subject to all of the same guidelines as a faculty-initiated proposal. At the request of the President or designee, a faculty member may agree to submit the proposal on behalf of the administration. It will be made clear that the proposal is being initiated by the administration and the submission by a faculty member will not be considered as an endorsement by their department, school or interdisciplinary program.

Proposals Lacking Department Assent. A proposal that is submitted for review without the assent of the originating department, school, or interdisciplinary program shall be returned to the proposer accompanied by a statement explaining the rejection rationale. The proposer has the option either to revise and resubmit the proposal or to request that the proposal be forwarded to dissemination (Step 3, below) with the negative recommendation by the department, school, or interdisciplinary program noted.

Interdisciplinary and Multiple Department Proposals. For a proposal that originates within an interdisciplinary program, the program coordinator/director will indicate recommendation of the proposal, and will distribute the proposal to the chairpersons of all departments and schools represented on that program's curriculum committee for action. Upon consent of all indicated departments and schools, the program coordinator/director will initiate the process of disseminating the proposal (Step 3, below) to the campus community for review. For a proposal that originates within multiple departments, schools and/or interdisciplinary programs, all of their chairperson(s) and coordinator/director(s) must assent to the proposal. The cooperating departments will identify a lead chairperson or coordinator/director to initiate the process of disseminating the proposal for campus review (Step 3, below).

Primary Curriculum Committee Designation. For a proposal that originates from a department or school, the proposer and the chairperson will determine which primary curriculum committee(s) (ACC(s) and/or TEC), should review the proposal (Step 3, below). A proposal from one or more interdisciplinary programs or from multiple departments or schools will be directed for simultaneous review to all ACCs in which the programs' committee members' home departments have representation.

Decanal Analysis. Course and program development and modifications frequently have serious implications for resource allocations. To ensure early administrative response to the financial implications of a curricular proposal, a proposal submitted to the ACC(s) for evaluation will be submitted simultaneously to the corresponding College Dean(s); the proposal will be accompanied by Resource

Guide documents that will aid the Dean(s) in that evaluation. Each College Dean that receives the proposal will provide an assessment of the impact on resources in writing to the initiating department or school chairperson or interdisciplinary program coordinator/director. Nothing in this statement shall be interpreted to mean that the Dean(s) can delay or prevent courses and programs from being considered by the appropriate University committees.

Step 3: Dissemination and the Primary Curriculum Committee Reviews

Dissemination: Dissemination consists of electronic notification of all department and school chairpersons, all members of ACCs, TEC, UCPRC and Faculty Senate about the availability of a new proposal. The disseminated proposal will be designated for the appropriate ACC(s) and/or TEC[1] (Step 2, above). These are the **primary curriculum committees**. Dissemination will occur after 4:00 pm on the Monday following the submission of a complete proposal (or the first day of the week if Monday is a vacation day and/or classes are cancelled for any reason). All faculty will have the ability to review proposals through the electronic proposal management system.

Primary Curriculum Committee Operating Procedures: Processes for establishing membership and selection of chairpersons of the ACCs and TEC, including notification to Faculty Senate and the administration, are described in the University Area Curriculum Committee and Teacher Education Council policies...

ACCs will establish a fixed meeting time (weekday and time) to be used in the event that the committee chairperson determines that there is a need for the committee to meet with a proposer, or to discuss curriculum matters such as evaluation criteria. At the end of the academic year, it is the responsibility of the ACC chairperson to communicate that meeting time to the chairpersons, and to the committee representatives, of member departments and schools (including departments and schools who elected to become members via Faculty Senate). Each ACC will meet face-to-face at least once near the beginning of each semester, after the ACC chairperson has met with the UCPRC chairperson (Steps 4 and 5, below). It is up to each ACC chairperson to establish working procedures that meet all of the requirements of the curriculum approval process.

Proposal Review: ACC and TEC chairpersons will review the list of proposals released for dissemination, which indicates which ACC is designated as the primary curriculum committee. A primary curriculum committee chairperson may, upon reviewing a proposal and determining it is not within the ACC's purview, and with majority support of the committee's members, inform the chairperson of UCPRC, the President or designee, the proposer and the initiating chairperson or coordinator/director, that the ACC will decline the invitation to review. In the event that such a declination leaves a proposal without a primary curriculum committee, the chairperson of UCPRC will assign the proposal to an ACC as the primary curriculum committee, which assignment cannot be declined.

Primary curriculum committee members will read all proposals designated for their committee within the first week following dissemination. Any primary curriculum committee member with any concern or objection regarding a proposal will communicate that concern or objection to the proposer to clarify the issue or work toward resolution, with a copy of that communication going to the chairperson of that primary curriculum committee who will, in turn, notify the other members of that primary curriculum committee, and the initiating chairperson or coordinator/director. Note that this communication may happen within the electronic proposal management system. If the issue is unresolved when it is time for that primary curriculum committee to vote, the primary curriculum committee chairperson will make the

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[1] Proposals originating in the College of Education and Human Services that involve teacher preparation programs will be reviewed by TEC, which will serve as the primary curriculum committee. Proposals from the other colleges that involve teacher preparation will first be reviewed by the appropriate ACC; then, based on a request from the chair of TEC, the proposals will undergo secondary review by TEC to ensure compliance with teacher education requirements. The TEC chair is responsible for monitoring campus notifications and requesting TEC review.

committee members aware of that situation, and will notify the chair of UCPRC about the unresolved issue.

Flagging Proposals: Any member of the faculty on the dissemination list but not on the designated primary curriculum committee(s) who has any concern or objection regarding a proposal will have the opportunity to communicate that concern or objection to the proposer to clarify the issue or work toward resolution, with a copy of that communication going to the chairperson(s) of the primary curriculum committee(s) reviewing the proposal (who will, in turn, notify the other members of that primary curriculum committee), the initiating chairperson or coordinator/director, and the chair of UCPRC. Such a proposal is considered to be "flagged," and unlike the opportunity to edit the proposal during review by the primary curriculum committee(s), this "flag" is registered on the proposal in the electronic proposal management system. If the proposer makes the requested revisions, the faculty member who raised the concern, as well as the chairperson of that primary curriculum committee, the members of that primary curriculum committee, and the initiating chairperson or coordinator/director proposer must also be notified. The faculty member who raised the concern may then remove the flag. Alternatively, the proposer and the initiating chairperson or coordinator/director may decide that it is more expedient to withdraw the proposal in order to work toward a resolution, and must then resubmit the revised proposal for dissemination (see Step 2, above). As a third alternative, the proposer may elect to have the primary curriculum committee vote on the proposal without revisions. In that case, the "flag" will remain attached to the proposal (see Step 4, below).

General Education proposals: Three ACCs will play specific roles in the review of General Education proposals. The Arts and Humanities ACC will be the primary curriculum committee for reviewing all G1 General Education course proposals. The Science and Technology ACC will be the primary curriculum committee for reviewing all G2 General Education course proposals. The Social Sciences ACC will be the primary curriculum committee for reviewing all G3 General Education course proposals. In order for consistent evaluation to occur at all levels of the curriculum review process, the UCPRC chairperson will communicate criteria that must be evaluated to the primary curriculum committees (see Steps 4 and 5, below).

Voting: The primary curriculum committee chairperson will call for a committee vote during the second week after dissemination, or after the committee meets with the proposer, and will enter the result of that vote by the end of that week to the electronic proposal management system. The result entered by the primary curriculum committee chairperson will indicate whether the proposal was recommended unanimously, recommended by majority, or not recommended.

A proposal that receives a negative recommendation from any primary curriculum committee shall be returned to the proposer and the initiating chairperson or coordinator/director, accompanied by a statement explaining the committee's rationale. The proposer has the option either to revise and resubmit the proposal based on the feedback or to request that the proposal be forwarded to UCPRC with the negative recommendation noted.

Proposals reviewed by multiple ACCs: Proposals requiring review by multiple ACC's, including interdisciplinary and[JD1] multiple department proposals, will first be reviewed by the designated primary curriculum committee. If the proposal is recommended by the primary curriculum committee, the proposal shall be referred to all other designated ACC's.[JD2]

Proposals that are not acted upon by all primary curriculum committees within 30 days of dissemination during the academic year[2] will move on for consideration by UCPRC.

Steps 4 and 5: UCPRC and Faculty Senate

UCPRC (the Undergraduate Course and Program Review Committee) is the lead committee of Faculty Senate regarding the undergraduate curriculum. Its formation is defined in the University Undergraduate Course and Program Review Committee. Its internal operating procedures will be determined by UCPRC

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[2] See the beginning of this document for an explanation of the curriculum approval process schedule.

and Faculty Senate; the following procedures define its interactions with the rest of the curriculum approval process.

The UCPRC chairperson will convene a face-to-face meeting to include the UCPRC chairperson, all ACC chairpersons, and the chairperson of TEC within the first two weeks of each semester. The purpose of this meeting is to review the curriculum approval criteria, to communicate any changing interpretations of any curriculum approval rules or criteria, and to enable communication and resolution of any other questions or concerns about the curriculum approval process.

Proposals recommended by the primary curriculum committees shall be forwarded to the UCPRC as follows:

- All new program proposals (for degrees, majors, minors, certificates, or concentrations) are reviewed by UCPRC.

- All new course proposals requesting the addition of a general education designation, with the exception of the G1, G2, and G3 labels (see Step 3, above), are reviewed by UCPRC.

- All proposals that are not recommended unanimously by the primary curriculum committee(s) and all "flagged" proposals are reviewed by UCPRC.

- All proposals that are unanimously approved by the primary curriculum committee(s) and do not fit into the above categories bypass UCPRC are forwarded directly to the Faculty Senate chairperson to be included on the consent agenda of the Faculty Senate.

The UCPRC chairperson will review the entire list of proposals approved by the primary curriculum committees as soon as possible after those committee votes are recorded in the electronic proposal management system. The UCPRC chairperson will notify the committee members about which proposals require UCPRC review and when each proposal will be included on the UCPRC agenda.

A proposal receiving a negative recommendation from UCPRC shall be returned to the proposer and the initiating chairperson or coordinator/director accompanied by an explanation for the committee's decision. The proposer can choose to revise the proposal, or to request that the proposal be forwarded to Faculty Senate with the negative recommendation noted. Such proposals will require a motion to approve and a second to be considered by Senate.

Should the Faculty Senate curricular committees (any ACC or UCPRC) fail to vote upon a proposal within sixty (60) days after dissemination, the initiating chairperson or coordinator/director shall have the right to submit said proposal directly to the Faculty Senate, whose recommendation will be considered final.

A proposal receiving a negative recommendation by Faculty Senate shall be returned to the initiating chairperson or coordinator/director accompanied by an explanation for the decision. The proposer and/or the initiating chairperson or coordinator/director will have the option of revising and resubmitting the proposal based on feedback or requesting that the proposal be forwarded to the President's designee with the negative recommendation noted.

Steps 6: The President's Designee

The President of the University is ultimately responsible for the university curriculum, and thus makes the final decision on curricular approvals. The President may assign a designee or designees to act on his or her behalf during any stage of the curricular approval process. Such designee or designees may include the Provost, Associate Provost, **Deans' Council**, or any university officer of the President's choosing. The President will also assign a designee to maintain the electronic proposal management system, which may include the Provost, Associate Provost for Academic Administration, or any university officer of the President's choosing.

The President (or his/her designee) will forward approved proposals to the **Registrar's Office** for implementation. The Registrar's Office will maintain all official copies of curriculum proposals, and will reflect all designated course implementation details in the curriculum records of students.

Step 7: The MU/PASSHE Administration

Some proposals, such as those for new degrees or majors, must be approved by the MU Council of Trustees or the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education before they can be implemented. The President or designee will be responsible for forwarding any such proposals to the appropriate body.

The outcomes of proposals that must be approved by the MU Council of Trustees or the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education before they can be implemented will normally be communicated directly to the proposer or to the chairperson of the originating department or school, or to the coordinator/director of the originating interdisciplinary program. It is the responsibility of the originating department's or school's faculty senator, or of the interdisciplinary program's coordinator/director, to communicate substantive changes made by the MU Council of Trustees or the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education back to Faculty Senate.