Curriculum and Course Standards Policy

Abstract

This policy provides lays out standards for new and revised curricula and courses.

Words: course proposals new courses curriculum

Author/Source:

Academic Policies Committee

Responsible Unit: Academic Affairs / DUEAP

History

Version  Approved  Revisions(s)

1  5/11/2021  05/11/2021

Original. Supersedes S91-170: Guiding Principles for Review and Approval of New or Revised Courses; S81-75: Proposed Guidelines for the Development and Approval of New Free Standing Interdisciplinary Minors.

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Principles:

- The curriculum is under the purview of the faculty of the University.
• The prime determination of curriculum and course content, appropriateness, relevance, criteria, and need reside at the department/program and college levels. Department or program by-laws should identify the faculty with oversight of different degree programs. This determination must be balanced by the necessity for departments/programs to mount the number of courses within a curriculum that can be taught with their existing faculty resources.

• The desire to create new curricula and courses should also be balanced with University requirements to operate within existing legislation, CSU guidelines, and limited resources. University-wide review of proposals should balance faculty creativity and academic freedom with curricular development, emerging trends in the disciplines, the integrity of existing curricula, and existing University resources.

• This policy covers undergraduate, post-graduate, and graduate academic programs: majors, minors, credentials, academic certificates, and subject matter preparation programs, etc.

• All curriculum and course development should begin with strategic program planning. Program planning should incorporate planning for faculty to offer the planned sequence of core courses and electives with sufficient space and technology to offer the curriculum. Course development should be coordinated with the development of the curriculum.

Criteria for New and Revised Curriculum Approval

• Proposals for new and revised curricula should be considered with the following criteria in mind:
  a. The new or revised curricula upholds the mission and goals of the University and follows all SF State, CSU, Title 5, and WASC policies;
  b. The new or revised curricula provides a coherent set of core and elective courses to allow students to build knowledge and skills in the degree area and to meet program learning outcomes (PLOs) and other goals (incorporating expected degree competencies or student learning outcomes);
  c. The proposed curriculum provides adequate opportunities for students to develop effective writing, communication, critical thinking, information literacy, and quantitative reasoning skills;
  d. The proposed curriculum is designed in such a way as to help ensure student success (i.e., no bottleneck courses) and to help students graduate in a timely fashion;
  e. The proposed curriculum uses the results of Academic Program Reviews, program learning outcome assessments, and any professional accreditation reviews;
  f. The proposed curriculum does not duplicate any existing curriculum, as defined by similar subject matter and learning outcomes;
  g. The proposal coordinates with proposals for new or revised courses within the curriculum process;
  h. The proposal identifies the mode of curriculum delivery and adheres to F20-264 Online Education policy and to F20-255: Requirements for Baccalaureate Degrees, Majors, Concentration, Minors, and Certificates and Appendices;
  i. The proposed curriculum prepares students for job opportunities following graduation, fosters student intellectual and creative growth, contributes to community well-being, and/or prepares students for graduate studies.
  j. Departments and programs must be able to illustrate they have the existing faculty resources to teach the curriculum (this can be achieved by a matrix such as that shown in the Appendix to this policy); and,
  k. Departments and programs have an adequate plan to assess the effectiveness of the curriculum in meeting program learning outcomes.
• The Academic Senate must approve the prospectus for new bachelor’s and master’s degrees to be on the SF State Academic Master Plan prior to being submitted to the Board of Trustees.

Criteria for course review and approval

To be approved, a new or revised course must meet the following criteria:

• The proposed course must not duplicate existing courses.
  o Review for similar courses offered in other departments/programs, and if they exist, consult with that department/program and resolve any potential duplication.
If conflicts cannot be resolved, then cross-listing or pairing are possible outcomes. If a conflict still cannot be resolved, the proposed course(s) would go to the Curriculum Review and Approval Committee to make a final decision.

- Potential paired courses should comply with the existing policy on paired courses (S20-126: Graduate Paired Courses Policy)
- There should be evidence of how the course fits within the context of the department’s/program’s existing or proposed curriculum, as submitted to the college.
- The course student learning outcomes must be directly tied to existing or planned program or GE learning outcomes or should otherwise forward the mission of the department.
- Departments/programs should plan to teach each core course one time per year and other courses on a regular basis, as relevant to their curricular needs and that of their students. They can illustrate that ability in a variety of ways: a matrix of faculty and their teaching schedules for two years or through other means. If a department/program plans to teach a course less often than every four semesters, that should be included in the Bulletin.
- Courses that have not been taught for five years are deactivated/archived. Any deactivated/archived course can be reactivated within the next five years through the course revision process.

When proposing new courses, departments or programs should review their existing courses for redundancy and identify courses that might be outdated or no longer relevant to the current curriculum. Courses no longer needed or those not offered in a five-year period should be deactivated.

Content of the proposals

The proposal for a new or revised curricula or courses must include all required elements outlined by Academic Planning (DUEAP). Academic Planning is also responsible for setting out a coherent process.

With a goal of having proposals complete the review process within one academic year, all new program proposals should be submitted by end of Fall deadlines set by DUEAP. Revised program proposals may be submitted up until a Spring deadline.

New course proposals should be submitted by Fall and Spring deadlines. Revised course proposals will be considered on a rolling basis. All new courses and new topics for variable topic courses are eligible for inclusion in the semester after the proposal is submitted.

All approved program revisions and new programs, will become effective at the beginning of the first Fall semester after being fully approved, according to best practices.

All curricula should be periodically reviewed by the Academic Program Review Committee (APRC), as laid out in Academic Senate policies covering the current APRC cycle of review.

Signed Memo:
S21-296 memo