Memorandum To: Academic Council  
From: J. Keith Nisbett, Curricula Committee Chair  
Date: September 17, 2007  
RE: 2006-07 Activity Report of Curricula Committee

During the 2006-07 academic year, the Curricula Committee held nine regularly scheduled meetings to consider and make recommendations on campus curricular matters. Minutes of these meetings are available at http://registrar.umr.edu/currcom/minutes.html.

The committee evaluated and made recommendations to the Academic Council on approximately 129 Experimental Course (EC) forms, 172 Course Change (CC) forms, and 49 Degree Change (DC) forms.

In addition to these routine curricular evaluations, the committee discussed and provided input on several issues raised by the administrative organizational changes. The Curricula Committee worked with the RP&A committee, as well as an ad-hoc committee to work out suggested by-law changes to establish policy for curricular matters that are not owned by a specific department. In order to clarify the current processes, a Course and Curricula Processes Report was prepared (included following this memo).

The Curricula Committee received a referral from Academic Council regarding the approval process for Graduate Certificates. An interim report was provided orally to the RP&A committee. No final report has yet been submitted.
Approval Process

Approval Path
Any modifications to curricula, whether it be introduction of a new course, the modification of an existing course, the modification of a degree program, or introduction of a new degree program, currently undergoes an approval process to encourage refinement, consistency, and awareness. The process flow is shown in Figure 1. The process typically originates at the department level, and requires approval from the department chair, School/College Dean, Curricula Committee, and Academic Council.

Proposals for new degree programs are also reviewed by the Budgetary Affairs committee of the Academic Council. Graduate level degrees require approval of the Graduate Faculty. Once new degree proposals receive campus approval, they are forwarded by the Provost for approval to the Board of Curators and the Coordinating Board of Higher Education.

Circulation
At each level of the process, appropriate circulation of proposals is facilitated. Each School/College has its own processes for reviewing and approving curricular issues. The typical procedure includes a School/College level Curricula Committee that reviews all proposals originating from the School/College. Many concerns, conflicts, and errors are identified and resolved at this level. The Dean or Associate Dean is responsible for ensuring adherence to School/College policies, and for resolving any issues before sending the proposal forward to the campus level Curricula Committee. The Curricula Committee of the Academic Council provides the first campus-wide level of review, and thus has a 3 week circulation to all department chairs of all proposals on its monthly agenda. The entire process takes a minimum of approximately 8-10 weeks from the department approval to Academic Council approval.

Forms
Standardized forms are used to present curricular proposals consistently and concisely. The Experimental Course (EC) form is used to propose an experimental offering of a new course. The Course Change (CC) form is used to propose modifications to existing courses. The Degree Change (DC) form is used to propose new or modified degree programs. These forms are included in Appendix A.
Individual Courses

Experimental Courses

A new course is required to be offered twice as an experimental course before being proposed as a permanent course. This provides an opportunity to determine that the course has enough sustained interest to be given a permanent course number and to be printed in the catalog. To expedite the process for offering experimental courses, the Academic Council does not review them, but has authorized the offering of experimental courses that have received approval from the Curricula Committee. After a course has been offered twice experimentally, it can be proposed as a permanent course. Courses that are part of the requirements of a degree program or minor may be proposed directly as permanent courses without going through the experimental process.

Course Life Cycle

Permanent courses may remain in the catalog indefinitely. The content of permanent courses may evolve in time, but are expected to remain consistent with the published course description. Departments bear the responsibility to initiate Course Change forms as necessary to update the course title, description, and prerequisites of its courses. Departments may initiate a request to the Registrar to suppress the printing in the catalog of any course that is not expected to be offered for a while. Departments may initiate a Course Change form to permanently delete a course that is no longer needed.

New Degree Programs

Proposals for new degree programs follow the format specified by the Coordinating Board for Higher Education (CBHE). This ensures consistency in addressing appropriate topics, such as market demand, duplication, and budgetary issues. The most commonly required CBHE forms for new degree programs are included in Appendix B. In addition to the usual review by the Curricula Committee, the Budgetary Affairs Committee reviews the budgetary implications of all new degree proposals, and reports its recommendation to Academic Council.
Curricular Proposals from Department faculty

Department Chair

School/College Dean

Curricula Committee

Budgetary Affairs

Academic Council

Graduate Faculty

Chancellor/Provost

UM Board of Curators

CBHE

Approved Experimental Courses

Approved Curricular Changes

Approved New Degree Programs

New Degree Programs

Graduate Degree Programs

Approved
New Degree Programs

Figure 1. Curricular Approval Process