

Ensuring Effective Curriculum Approval Processes: A Guide for Local Senates

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2015-2016 Curriculum Committee

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Introduction

Curriculum is the heart of the mission of every college. College curriculum approval processes have been established to ensure that rigorous, high quality curriculum is offered that meets the needs of students. While some concerns may exist regarding the effectiveness and efficiency of local curriculum processes, all participants in the process must remember - and remind external stakeholders - that the faculty of the California community colleges have long worked to ensure that their college curriculum approval processes are sufficiently robust and deliberative to ensure that standards for high quality and rigor appropriate for college curriculum are met and maintained. Through their local senates and curriculum committees, California community college faculty are entrusted not only with the professional responsibility for developing high quality curriculum but also with the professional responsibility for establishing local curriculum approval processes and ensuring that local curriculum approval processes allow curriculum to be approved in a timely manner. Students are best served when curriculum approval processes are efficient and effective and when they ensure a focus on the quality and rigor of the curriculum. Therefore, local senates should periodically review their curriculum approval processes to determine if any improvements are needed and implement any necessary changes.

In recognition of the need for local senates to be provided guidance on ensuring the effectiveness of their local curriculum processes, the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC) adopted Resolution 9.01 S15:

Whereas, Colleges and districts have a variety of local curriculum processes, including timelines indicating when courses and programs are submitted to technical review committees, curriculum committees, academic senates, and governing boards;

Whereas, Timely curriculum processes are required for all disciplines and programs; and

Whereas, Colleges would benefit from a paper outlining effective practices for local processes on curriculum approval;

Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges survey curriculum chairs on the timeliness of their local curriculum approval processes by Fall 2015 and develop a paper on effective practices for local curriculum approval and present it to the field for adoption at the Fall 2016 Plenary Session.

As an initial response to the directions provided by Resolution 9.01 S15, the ASCCC Curriculum Committee drafted a survey on Curriculum Efficiency and Communication that was distributed to curriculum chairs and chief instructional officers in the spring of 2015¹. The survey results, based on 143 responses from the field, provide an informative snapshot of the status of curriculum approval processes of the California community colleges as of spring of 2015. The most notable results gathered in from the survey

¹ The narrative summary of the survey results is included in Appendix A.

include the following:

- 77% stated that it takes less than 6 months to get curriculum through their local processes, from submission to the curriculum committee to submission to the governing board.
- 95% have a technical review process, and 86% stated that faculty typically require less than 6 months to prepare curriculum proposals for technical review.
- 67% stated that their curriculum committees have been delegated the authority to make recommendations directly to the governing board.
- 61% stated that curriculum is submitted to the governing board for consideration monthly.
- 58% stated they were from multi-college districts. Of those, 56% stated that they have common/coordinated or aligned curriculum, and 44% stated that approval by a district curriculum committee is required.
- 86% stated that they provide training to the faculty on their curriculum committees.

The results of the 2015 survey demonstrate that a significant majority of colleges have relatively efficient curriculum approval processes. However, local curriculum processes can still benefit from regular review and evaluation to identify areas of possible improvement. As with any institutional process, and as a matter of good practice for ensuring the overall quality of the institution and its curriculum, local senates should regularly review, evaluate, and improve as needed their curriculum approval processes.

With the November 16, 2015 approval by the Board of Governors of the *Report of the*

*Task Force on Workforce, Job Creation, and a Strong Economy*² that was focused on career and technical education (CTE), as well as with the development of the Community College Baccalaureate Degrees Pilot created by SB 850 (Block, 2014), effective and efficient curriculum approval processes are increasingly a subject of interest at the local and state level. Many of the task force recommendations relate directly to curriculum and, more specifically, to ensuring that local curriculum processes function in ways that allow for community college CTE programs to respond effectively and in a timely manner to changes in industry and the workforce as well as to the needs of the communities they serve. Although the recommendations focus on CTE, effective and efficient curriculum approval processes are beneficial to all programs. Furthermore, accreditation requirements are also important factors that push colleges to establish efficient and effective curriculum processes that ensure a high-quality curriculum.

As a further response to Resolution 9.01 S15, and as an initial response to the fall 2015 recommendations in the *Report of the Task Force on Workforce, Job Creation, and a Strong Economy*, the ASCCC Curriculum Committee drafted the white paper *Ensuring Effective and Efficient Curriculum Processes – An Academic Senate White Paper*³, and the Executive Committee approved this document in October 2015 and distributed it to the field in November 2015. The white paper provided the field with guidance focused

² *Report of the Task Force on Workforce, Jobs Creation, and a Strong Economy*, Board of Governors (Approved November 16, 2015)

http://doingwhatmatters.cccco.edu/portals/6/docs/sw/BOG_TaskForce_Report_v12_web.pdf

³ *Ensuring Effective and Efficient Curriculum Processes – An Academic Senate White Paper*, Academic Senate for California Community Colleges Executive Committee (Fall 2015)

http://asccc.org/sites/default/files/Effective_Curriculum_Practices_White_Paper_Final.docx

on reviewing and revising curriculum policies and procedures as needed, and included examples of good practices for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of curriculum approval processes. Finally, in recognition of the need for local senates to take leadership roles in addressing the Workforce Task Force recommendations at the local level and begin the process of evaluating their curriculum approval processes as soon as possible, the ASCCC adopted Resolution 9.08 F15 at the 2015 Fall Plenary Session:

Whereas, The Recommendations of the California Community Colleges Task Force on Workforce, Job Creation, and a Strong Economy (August 14, 2015) identified six recommendations for improving curriculum processes, including the recommendation to “evaluate, revise and resource the local, regional, and statewide CTE curriculum approval process to ensure timely, responsive, and streamlined curriculum approval”;

Whereas, The reported inefficiencies of local curriculum processes are often cited as the reason courses and programs are not approved in a timely enough manner to meet student, community, and industry needs; and

Whereas, Colleges may benefit from an evaluation of their local curriculum processes that leads to improvements in the effectiveness and efficiency that allow for more timely responses to student, community, and industry needs;

Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges strongly urge local senates and curriculum committees to evaluate their curriculum

approval processes in order to ensure that curriculum is developed, revised, and implemented in a timely manner, while preserving the integrity and rigor of the review process.

The subjects of this paper are to provide guidance to local senates and curriculum committees on effective practices for curriculum approval processes and to focus on the participatory governance aspects of curriculum. While guidance and effective practices for developing new courses and programs are beyond the scope of this paper, other ASCCC papers address these practices⁴. The contents of the Fall 2015 white paper are incorporated in this document, with additional guidance provided regarding professional development and training related to local curriculum approval processes, providing sufficient resources for the college curriculum team, and guidance on separate distance education approval requirements.

The Curriculum Committee

Title 5 §55002 requires colleges to establish curriculum committees. An effective local curriculum process requires that all college constituencies understand the legally defined role of the curriculum committee and the legal requirements for establishing its structure. The ASCCC paper *The Curriculum Committee, Role Structure, Duties and Standards of Good Practice* (adopted 1996) provides thorough guidance on the role, authority, and structure of curriculum committees.

⁴ For guidance on effective practices for creating a high quality course outline of record, please see *The Course Outline of Record: A Curriculum Reference Guide*, Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (Adopted Spring 2008)
http://asccc.org/sites/default/files/publications/Curriculum-paper_0.pdf

The Role and Authority of the Curriculum Committee

Curriculum committees derive their legal authority from the Education Code and the California Code of Regulations. Specifically, Education Code §70902(b)(7) gives local academic senates the right “to assume primary responsibility for making recommendations in the areas of curriculum and academic standards.” California Code of Regulations Title 5 §53200 identifies curriculum as an academic and professional matter under the purview of academic senates, while Title 5 §55002 requires colleges and/or districts to establish a curriculum committee either as a committee of the local senate or as a separate committee established by mutual agreement between the administration and the local senate. Furthermore, §55002 gives curriculum committees the full authority to recommend approval of new degree-applicable credit courses, non-degree applicable credit courses, and noncredit courses directly to the governing board. Title 5 is less direct regarding the role of curriculum committees in approving recommendations regarding degree and certificate programs. Title 5 §55070 and §55151 are very clear that curriculum committees are to make recommendations about credit and noncredit certificates. Title 5 is not explicit about the role of curriculum committees in approving recommendations on associate degree programs. However, educational program development is an academic and professional matter identified in §53200, and, in partnership with academic senates, curriculum committees are generally and appropriately delegated the responsibility to review and recommend approvals or revisions to educational programs. Furthermore, given that local senates have the authority to recommend approval of new or revised educational programs to the governing board, local senates have the purview to delegate to curriculum committees the

authority to recommend approval of new programs directly to the governing board. Finally, Education Code and Title 5 regulations contain no language requiring that new courses and programs be approved by deans, chief instructional officers (CIOs), or college presidents following curriculum committee approval and prior to submission to the governing board. While colleges and districts may have local policies and procedures that require additional steps between curriculum committee approval and governing board approval of new courses and programs, no legal requirement mandates such intermediate approvals.

While no legal requirement exists for administrative approvals of new courses and programs, instructional deans and CIOs should be involved in curriculum approval processes⁵. In fact, curriculum approval should be a collegial and collaborative process involving all college constituencies; everyone has a stake in ensuring that the college offers curriculum that best serves the needs of its students. A collegial and collaborative curriculum approval process that culminates with curriculum committee approval of curriculum recommendations to the governing board should eliminate the need for additional approval steps between curriculum committee approval and governing board consideration.

Instructional deans and CIOs should assist faculty in the curriculum development and review processes. These administrators are knowledgeable about compliance and

⁵ The paper *CIO Manual: Overview and Responsibilities*, adopted by the California Community Colleges Chief Instructional Officers in July 2012, provides a discussion of the appropriate role of the Chief Instructional Officer in the curriculum approval process. It is found at <http://ccccio.org/documents/CIOManual01-05-2013.pdf>

resource requirements for courses and programs, and their early involvement in the process can prevent mistakes and delays later. Such expertise provides valuable and complementary guidance to the faculty content experts. A final review by the CIO—though not approval—of the proposals approved by the curriculum committee ensures that the governing board can be confident that the proposed curriculum aligns with the college mission, complies with the requirements of Title 5 and the Program and Course Approval Handbook (PCAH), and fulfills validated college needs and that the institution has sufficient resources to support implementation of the new curriculum.

Not only is the inclusion of students in the curriculum approval process good practice, but providing an opportunity for student involvement is legally required. Under Education Code §70902(b)(7), students are afforded the right to participate effectively in college governance, and Title 5 §51023.7 states that students “shall be provided an opportunity to participate in formulation and development of district and college policies and procedures that have or will have a significant effect on students,” including policies and procedures for curriculum development. Thus, curriculum committees should include representatives from the local student senate or leadership organization in order to afford students the opportunity to participate in curriculum approval processes.

The final authority for approving new courses and programs always rests with the governing board or its designee. The CIO is often responsible for ensuring that proposals are forwarded to the governing board for approval. If the CIO, who has the ultimate authority on whether or not courses are offered in the schedule of classes, has serious

concerns about curriculum proposals, those concerns will be brought to the governing board. If the CIO is included in the curriculum process before final approval of the proposals, such concerns may be addressed and resolved before reaching the governing board. Each governing board includes at least one non-voting student trustee; when the student voice is not included—or is ignored—in the curriculum approval process, the governing board should take notice and may delay approval of new courses and programs when students raise serious objections. Therefore, students, deans, and CIOs should be involved throughout the curriculum approval process. Such involvement will help the faculty identify potential problems with curriculum proposals early in the approval process and minimize any concerns that may be expressed to the governing board when new courses and programs come before them for approval.

Membership and Structure of the Curriculum Committee

The establishment of the membership structure of the curriculum committee is a local district decision made in accordance with the requirements of Title 5 §55002(a)(1), which states, “The college and/or district curriculum committee recommending the course shall be established by the mutual agreement of the college and/or district administration and the academic senate. The committee shall be either a committee of the academic senate or a committee that includes faculty and is otherwise comprised in a way that is mutually agreeable to the college and/or district administration and the academic senate.” In the 1996 Academic Senate paper *The Curriculum Committee: Role, Structures, Duties, and Standards of Good Practice*, the following interpretation of section 55002(a)(1) is provided:

The curriculum committee reviews and recommends courses and programs functioning under policies and procedures set by the academic senate (either through primary advice to or mutual agreement with the board). The composition of the curriculum committee is agreed upon mutually even if for other curriculum policies and procedures the board relies primarily upon the senate.

Therefore, regardless of whether the curriculum committee is within the local senate committee structure or outside of the local senate structure, the membership of the curriculum committee is established by mutual agreement between the local senate and the administration. Furthermore, because curriculum committees are established by mutual agreement, the processes for making changes to their structures must also be made by mutual agreement with the administration.

However, a clear distinction should be made between the establishment and revision of the curriculum committee composition and the establishment and revision of the curriculum approval process. The curriculum approval process is an academic and professional matter subject to collegial consultation under Title 5 §53200, and thus the governing board establishes the local curriculum approval process by either relying primarily upon or reaching mutual agreement with the local senate. Therefore, in order to avoid confusion, local policies and procedures that establish the curriculum committee should be separate from the policies and procedures that establish the local curriculum approval process.

Because faculty have primacy when making recommendations on curriculum to the

governing board, the majority of the members on the curriculum committee should be faculty. In addition, ensuring broad representation from all of faculty groups is optimal because it allows for a wide range of perspectives to be brought to the discussions in curriculum committee meetings. Broad representation means not only ensuring that the diversity of instructional disciplines at the college are appropriately represented, including CTE, non-CTE, and noncredit, but it also means ensuring that library and counseling faculty, as well the college articulation officer, are included. Faculty with expertise in areas such as distance education, learning disabilities, learning assistance, student learning outcomes assessment, and the honors program also should be considered for inclusion. The distribution of representatives from the various faculty groups is a local decision and should be established in a manner that allows the curriculum committee to operate in the most efficient and effective manner possible. Regardless of what distribution of faculty membership is established for the curriculum committee, the faculty representatives must recognize that they are not on the committee to represent the interests of their disciplines, departments, or divisions. Rather, their role is to bring the perspectives of their areas to the discussions in curriculum committee meetings that lead to the best decisions being made for the students the college serves.

Administrators, staff, and students should be included to appropriate degrees as members of the curriculum committee. Curriculum committees commonly include at a minimum the CIO or a curriculum dean and a curriculum specialist. Other non-faculty members may include instructional deans who oversee the various areas of the college, including CTE, noncredit, and student services, and classified staff who work directly with

students, such as admissions and records staff who are course, transcript, and degree evaluators. Because Title 5 §51023.7 requires that students be given the opportunity to effectively participate in making recommendations on curricular matters, students should be represented on the curriculum committee. All of these non-faculty members can provide insights in curriculum committee deliberations that faculty typically may not have and can help curriculum committees make more informed decisions.

Whether non-faculty members of the curriculum committee are voting members is a local decision, but regardless of this decision on voting status, curriculum remains a matter of faculty primacy. A benefit of allowing non-faculty members to be voting members is that, while curriculum is a matter of faculty primacy, the curriculum belongs to and affects the entire institution. Making the curriculum committee as inclusive as possible leaves little room for doubt that the committee is the definitive authority on curricular matters. However, the faculty voice should never be diluted or effectively vetoed by non-faculty members of the curriculum committee. One method of preventing the dilution of the faculty voice is to establish a quorum requirement that the majority of the voting members present at the meeting are faculty, not simply 50% plus one of the voting membership. Local senates should ensure that the proportion of faculty voting members is sufficiently large to maintain faculty primacy over curriculum while maintaining inclusivity of non-faculty members in the curriculum approval process through the curriculum committee.

The leadership structure of the curriculum committee should be clearly defined.

Regardless of whether the curriculum committee is chaired solely by a faculty member or has faculty and non-faculty co-chairs, such as a faculty co-chair with a CIO or a curriculum specialist co-chair, the process for selecting chairs or co-chairs should be clearly documented and established in a way that retains the local senate's purview over the selection of the faculty chair or co-chair of the committee in accordance with Title 5 sections §53202 and §53203.

Additionally, curriculum committees may opt to form subcommittees for more focused work. Examples may include subcommittees that handle the technical review of course and program proposals, placement of courses in the local general education pattern, review of program and course student learning outcomes, prerequisites, honors course proposals, and local graduation requirements. The creation of subcommittees of the curriculum committee is a local decision and should be done based on local need and for the purpose of making the approval process more effective and efficient. Because of the potential for additional subcommittees to cause bottlenecks in the approval process, care must be taken to ensure that the creation of subcommittees does not unnecessarily slow the curriculum approval process. Finally, if subcommittees of the curriculum committee are established, each subcommittee should have a chair that is responsible for facilitating the work of the subcommittee and for regularly reporting the outcomes of the subcommittee's work to the curriculum committee.

Local Curriculum Approval Processes: Review, Evaluate, and Improve

Over 77% of respondents to the ASCCC spring 2015 survey on Curriculum Efficiency and Communication stated that the typical time for approval of curriculum is six months or less, from submission to the curriculum committee to approval by the governing board (Appendix A). However, six months encompasses most of the academic year, and any approval process that takes longer than one primary term⁶ of approximately three months may unnecessarily delay the availability of new curriculum to students. Ideally, as a rule of thumb, local senates should strive for an approval process that allows curriculum proposals submitted to the curriculum committee for approval at the beginning of a primary term to be submitted for action by the governing board by the end of that same term. This practice should allow the new curriculum to be published in the next edition of the college catalog and enable timely scheduling of newly approved courses.⁷

Before local senates determine whether or not local curriculum approval processes need improvement, they should first review and evaluate their processes to identify areas of concern before proposing any improvements. Once this stage is completed, then methods for improving the curriculum process can be developed and implemented. In this section, guidance and recommendations for reviewing, evaluating, and improving local curriculum approval processes are provided.

Stage 1 - Review and Evaluate the Approval Process

⁶ Primary term refers to fall and spring semesters, and fall, winter, and spring quarters.

⁷ Catalog and schedule production processes are typically external to curriculum approval processes. However, if catalog and schedule production are found to cause delays in offering new courses, local senates should work with their administrations to address this.

Before implementing any changes to the local curriculum approval processes, local senates and curriculum committees should first conduct a review and evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of their processes. Important questions to ask during such a review include the following:

- How long does it take to approve a new course or program, or to revise an existing course or program, from initiation of the process by the discipline faculty to approval by the governing board, and could this timeline be improved?
- Does the approval process contain redundant or unnecessary steps, and, if so, what steps could be eliminated without negative impacts?
- Does the approval process require unnecessary approval steps, relative to what is actually required by title 5?
- Does the approval process contain steps that could be completed simultaneously rather than sequentially?
- Are local course and program submission and deadlines, whether to the curriculum committee or to the governing board, too infrequent or restrictive?
- Is the approval process impeded by problems caused by ineffective technology, or even a lack of technology, at the local level?
- Does the approval process focus too much on complying with course outline formatting instructions and correcting grammar and too little on course and program quality?

While academic senates and curriculum committees must lead the effort to review and evaluate their curriculum approval processes, CIOs, instructional deans, curriculum

specialists, articulation officers and student leadership should also be included in this review and evaluation. A good review and evaluation process should also include input from the faculty at large. They can provide a perspective about the curriculum process that may not be readily apparent to curriculum leaders who are more closely engaged with the process on a regular basis. Regardless of how the local review and evaluation is done, since curriculum approval policies and processes are academic and professional matters, local academic senates are responsible for recommending revisions to curriculum policies and procedures directly to their governing boards or their designees as appropriate.

Stage 2. Make the Changes - Recommendations for Optimizing Curriculum Processes

1. Make sure the process for initiation of new curriculum and revisions to existing curriculum is clear.

Provide faculty with a clear description of the process and timelines. Effective practices for such communication include the following:

- Create a curriculum calendar or a process flow chart that clearly presents important due dates and illustrates the process from initiation to approval.
- Create a curriculum website that allows easy access to local, district, and statewide curriculum resources.
- Create a curriculum handbook that includes all curriculum policies and procedures, a discussion of the importance of high quality curriculum and an explanation of its elements, and descriptions and instructions for all aspects of the

curriculum process including instructions for using the curriculum management system.

2. Make sure the technical review process is streamlined and effective.

Local senates and curriculum committees should identify ways to minimize the time between curriculum development, technical review, and curriculum approval without sacrificing rigor and instructional quality. Ideally, once a new course or program is submitted for review and approval, it should come to the curriculum committee for first reading within one month of submission, provided the curriculum developer responds to requests for corrections to the course or program submission during the technical review and other stages. If a course or program proposal is submitted to the curriculum committee for approval at the beginning of the primary term, it should be available for approval by the curriculum committee and submitted to the governing board by the end of that same term.

Because technical review of curriculum proposals is typically the first step in the curriculum approval process, it is the first opportunity for a bottleneck in the process. Therefore, the technical review process must be as efficient as possible. Some examples of ways to make technical review more efficient include the following:

- Before engaging in a full technical review, have curriculum committee members help faculty by screening curriculum submissions for completeness.

- Make technical review simultaneous with curriculum proposal development so that the curriculum developer is receiving constructive input by technical reviewers prior to submission for formal or official technical review.
- Limit the technical review committee to the most critical individuals, such as the curriculum chair, articulation officer, librarian, SLO coordinator, distance education expert, curriculum specialist, and the CIO or designee, and allow them to conduct their review simultaneously rather than sequentially.
- Create criteria, submission schedules, and approval processes that allow minor changes to courses and programs to undergo an expedited or streamlined technical review rather than a full technical review.
- Provide the technical review team with adequate time and support to do their work in a timely fashion.
- Proofread carefully. Curriculum is a matter of public record, so all public documents, such as the course outline of record, must be of a level of quality and accuracy commensurate with an institution of higher education.

3. Make sure curriculum committee meetings are run efficiently.

Once the technical review of new curriculum is completed, proposals move to the curriculum committee for review and approval. Curriculum committee members must be well prepared and curriculum committee meetings should be run as effectively as possible. Curriculum committees should focus on the content of the curriculum rather than on minutiae, such as grammar and spelling, during meetings. Focusing too much on such minutiae can render a curriculum committee ineffective and result in delays to the

approval and offering of new curriculum. The ASCCC paper *The Course Outline of Record: A Curriculum Reference Guide* (adopted spring 2008) provides examples of the appropriate role of the curriculum committee in the consideration of proposed substantive, non-substantive, and technical changes to courses (pp. 64-65).

Some effective practices that can be employed to ensure curriculum committees complete their business in a timely and effective manner include the following:

- Prepare a well-organized agenda that includes the pertinent information such as course number, title, and whether the proposal is for a revision or new course.
- Assign several curriculum committee members to each proposal as readers that will provide prepared responses to the curriculum developers and help the curriculum committee from becoming too overwhelmed, particularly when a large number of new curriculum proposals are submitted.
- Use a consent agenda for non-substantive changes to curriculum.
- Engage in detailed review of new curriculum during first readings and use consent calendars for approval at the second reading.
- Allow CTE proposals that are the result of statutory or external accreditation requirements to be approved without a second reading by the curriculum committee.
- Consider giving curriculum committee members access to the curriculum management system so that they can make reviewer comments prior to the first reading by the curriculum committee.

- Rather than discussing typographical and grammar errors during meetings, send such noted errors to the curriculum chair or designee for correction.

4. Streamline the approval process.

Curriculum committees have the legal authority to submit recommendations on new curriculum directly to the governing board if the local senate has delegated that authority to the curriculum committee. According to the 2015 Curriculum Efficiency and Communication survey, 67% of respondents stated that their curriculum committees have been delegated the authority to submit new curriculum recommendations to the governing board. While governing boards must approve new courses and programs, colleges may grant their curriculum committees authority for final approval of minor revisions. Again, no legal requirement exists for boards, CEOs, CIOs, or even local senates to approve minor revisions to courses and programs. Effective technical review processes should eliminate the need for further approvals beyond the curriculum committee.

Colleges may also consider expedited approval for time-sensitive curriculum proposals. For example, CTE programs often undergo discipline-specific external accreditation. Specific external accreditation requirements regarding their curriculum may require more immediate action. In addition to approval by the governing board, new CTE degree and certificate programs require separate review and action by the appropriate regional consortium prior to submission to the Chancellor's Office (title 5 §55130). However, any

expedited approval of curriculum must not come at the expense of quality or rigor.

Examples of methods for expediting approval of new curriculum include the following:

- Give curriculum committees full authority to make recommendations on new courses and programs directly to the governing board and remove any intermediate approval steps.
- Give curriculum committees full authority to approve non-substantive changes—as defined locally—to courses and programs without any additional approvals, including approval by the governing board.
- Limit curriculum submissions to the governing board to approval of new courses and programs.
- Submit new CTE program proposals to the regional consortium prior to or simultaneously with submission to the curriculum committee for local program approval and prior to submission to the governing board.⁸
- Expedite technical review for course revisions that only involve changes to course attributes such as content and objectives or for changes to courses and programs that are required as a result of changes to statutory or external accreditation requirements. For multi-college districts, consider giving college curriculum committees the authority to grant final approval for adoption of courses at one college that already exist at other colleges within the district, since those courses have already been approved by the governing board.⁹

⁸ Regional consortia establish their own procedures for submission and review of new program proposals. Be sure to check the requirements of the regional consortium to determine if it does allow submissions of proposals prior to local curriculum committee or governing board approval.

⁹ An example of this process exists in the Los Rios CCD. The Los Rios CCD is a four-college district and allows colleges to adopt courses upon curriculum committee approval if those courses have already been approved by the governing board for adoption at another college in the district. The Chancellor's Office

5. Increase the frequency of curriculum approvals by the curriculum committee and the governing board.

The frequency of curriculum approval opportunities, at the curriculum committee and governing board levels, is a local decision. No matter how efficient and timely the technical review process is, if there are insufficient opportunities for curriculum to be reviewed by the curriculum committee or governing board, then approval and implementation of new or revised curriculum will be slow. Some curriculum committees meet weekly or biweekly, while others meet only monthly. Given that many curriculum committees use both a first reading and second reading for curriculum approvals, new course and program approvals by curriculum committees that meet monthly can take two months.

Another potential bottleneck in the approval process is the frequency of opportunities for submission of curriculum recommendations to the governing board. Some governing boards consider curriculum recommendations at every meeting, while others consider curriculum only once per term or even once per academic year. According to the 2015 Curriculum Efficiency and Communication survey, 61% of respondents stated that curriculum is submitted to the governing board monthly. On the other hand, 11% stated that the frequency of submission to the governing board is once per primary term, and 1% stated that this occur only once per year. Limitations in frequency of approvals by governing boards are local practices that have no basis in Education Code or title 5 and

only requires the original approval date of the course by the governing board when the college submits the newly adopted course to the Curriculum Inventory.

therefore can be changed locally. Recommendations for improving the frequency of curriculum approvals include the following:

- Schedule biweekly, or even weekly, standing meetings of the curriculum committee, particularly in the fall when curriculum approval workload is often the heaviest.
- Change local policies and procedures so that the governing board can approve curriculum at every meeting.

6. Consider giving colleges in multi-college districts autonomy over their curriculum.

Multi-college districts present additional challenges. For example, some districts may have requirements for aligned or partially aligned curriculum that requires district-wide review before new courses and programs are approved or before substantive changes to existing courses and programs are approved. In fact, 56% of respondents to the spring 2015 Curriculum Efficiency and Communication survey from multi-college districts stated that this practice is the case in their districts. Furthermore, 44% of respondents stated that approval by a district curriculum committee is required. However, legal requirement exists for colleges in multi-college districts to have identical or aligned curriculum, nor does a requirement for separate approval of college curriculum proposals by district curriculum committees. While alignment of curriculum in multi-college districts can certainly be of benefit to students, curriculum alignment requirements can also make curricular improvement at colleges much more difficult and lengthy.

Furthermore, accreditors hold colleges, not districts, responsible for the quality of their curriculum and the effectiveness of their curriculum approval processes, and if a district-

wide process is identified as not meeting the accreditation standards, then all of the colleges in the district will be sanctioned¹⁰.

If district-wide processes are identified as reasons that curriculum is not approved in a timely manner, then local senates should consider changing their district-wide processes in ways that give the colleges in the district more autonomy over curriculum.

Considerations include the following:

- Eliminating district-wide approvals or requirements for achieving consensus among the colleges in the district.
- Give each college in the district full autonomy over its curriculum, including attributes such as units and contact hours.
- If alignment of curriculum is a concern, use C-ID or articulation agreements as means to ensure a measure of alignment of curriculum rather than using rigid district-wide alignment requirements.

Training and Professional Development

Curriculum is complex, and no one can learn everything overnight. To truly grasp the many key elements of curriculum and the curriculum process, training is required. In this section, recommendations on who should be trained and to what level are provided.

Who Should Be Trained?

¹⁰ A summary of the accreditation eligibility requirements and standards that pertain to curriculum is provided in Appendix B.

When asked in the 2015 Curriculum Efficiency and Communication survey if regular training is provided for faculty on the curriculum committee, 85% of the respondents stated that regular training is provided. While faculty on the curriculum committee clearly must be trained, given the central importance of curriculum to a college's mission, at least a basic understanding of the local curriculum process should be ensured for all college personnel in the instructional and student services divisions responsible for student success, administrators in the college business services division, students, and members of the governing. This training should include all administrators at all levels, all faculty members, and appropriate classified staff. Each should have an understanding of the following basics of curriculum:

- The legal basis for faculty primacy over curriculum through local senates and curriculum committees.
- What a course outline of record is, why they are required, and where to access them.
- The existence of course, program, and institutional student learning outcomes (SLOs) and the differences between course SLOs and course objectives.
- The differences between prerequisites, co-requisites, and advisories how they are established through content review or statistical validation, and how disproportionate impact is assessed and addressed.
- The purpose of the Course Identification Numbering System (C-ID), how it interacts with local curriculum, and its role in the Associate Degrees for Transfer (ADT).

- Awareness of state requirements for curriculum as established in Education Code, Title 5 and the Program and Course Approval Handbook (PCAH), including the requirements for submission of curriculum to the Chancellor's Office.
- Awareness of local policies and procedures established for course and program curriculum development, including submission deadlines and required signatures or approvals.
- Awareness of program approval requirements for CTE programs, particularly the role of the regional consortium in CTE program approval.
- Awareness of specific separate accreditation requirements for CTE programs.
- Awareness of accreditation standards and, if appropriate, accreditor recommendations for the college as they pertain to curriculum.

While the reasons might seem obvious why faculty, administrators, board members and students should have an understanding of the curriculum process, classified staff should also have a basic understanding of the primary role of faculty and the legal requirements for curriculum. In particular, classified staff from admissions and records, the college office of instruction, and department or division offices should undergo professional development training on the curriculum process. Such staff are often required to understand grading policies, prerequisites, and legal requirements regarding the scheduling of units and hours. Furthermore, staff in information technology and in areas providing learning assistance, student services, and disabled services must understand the

relationship between curriculum and topics such as the Section 508 compliance¹¹ for instructional technology, prerequisites, financial aid, and library and tutoring needs. Training in the basics of curriculum is critical for these essential individuals to perform their jobs effectively. Furthermore, consulting with the staff in these areas during the development of curriculum allows staff to raise issues that might affect the ability of the college to offer new curriculum that might not have been otherwise recognized by the faculty or academic administrators.

Individuals who are more intimately involved with the curriculum process clearly need additional training beyond the basics described above. They include, but are not limited to, curriculum committee members, technical review committee members, curriculum specialists, academic or instructional and student service administrators, department chairs and educational program coordinators, counselors, librarians, student learning outcome coordinators, learning disabilities specialists, and distance education coordinators. The specific training required for each of these groups will vary, but all of these individuals should have a solid understanding of the curriculum process. In addition to the basics of curriculum outlined above that the broader group of stakeholders should understand, the more detailed information should include the following:

- The details of the local approval process for curriculum, from initiation by the discipline faculty, to the review and approval process by the curriculum committee, to action by the governing board.

¹¹ Section 508 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, amended 1998. For more information, go to <http://www.section508.gov/content/learn/standards>

- Timelines and deadlines for submitting new programs and courses, revisions to programs or courses, or updates to the college catalog.
- Quality standards for program and course development.
- The existence and purpose of the Program Course and Approval Handbook (PCAH).
- The basic requirements for submitting curriculum to the Chancellor's Office
- The required components of the course outline of record (COR) as detailed in title 5 and the PCAH.
- The Taxonomy of Programs (TOP), Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP), and the uses of TOP and CIP codes
- Associate Degrees for Transfer, Transfer Model Curricula and C-ID, local associate degrees, and the differences and connections between these items.
- The relationship between curriculum and course and program student learning outcomes.
- The types of certificates the college offers and the differences between them.
- The consideration of instructional materials fees and understanding of what is allowed and what is not allowed to be required of students.
- The placement of courses within disciplines, including standards and how this is distinct from granting faculty equivalency.
- The relationship between credit hours or units, student learning hours, and student contact hours.
- Separate approval for distance education proposals.
- Use of the curriculum management system, if applicable.

- The role of the regional consortia in the approval of new CTE programs.
- Awareness of the basic requirements for submitting new curriculum proposals and revisions to the Chancellor's Office.

What Type of Training Should Be Provided?

The means for providing curriculum training is a local matter, and this training can be accomplished in a variety of ways. At the core of any curriculum training program, as well as curriculum committee succession planning, should be a college or district curriculum handbook that provides a compendium of laws, regulations, and local policies and procedures for curriculum and clearly explains how to navigate the local curriculum process from initiation to final approval. Regardless of the form of the training, whether it involves locally developed presentations, webinars, or attendance at ASCCC events, a well-crafted and comprehensive curriculum handbook accessible to all can be very beneficial.

“Learning by doing” is also a valuable means for gaining familiarity with the curriculum approval process. All faculty are responsible for developing new curriculum or revising existing curriculum. Every faculty member at some point in his or her career should be involved in the development or revision of curriculum, and the earlier in the career this experience happens, the better. Newer faculty might work with experienced faculty to revise a course or program. Such engagement of discipline faculty in curriculum results in a broader understanding of how the curriculum approval process works.

Within a department or division, curriculum development and revision should be a collegial and collaborative effort between the discipline faculty that occurs at the initiation of the process. This collaboration will allow the faculty to reach consensus on curriculum proposals early in the process and avoid later disagreements that can cause delays when proposals are brought forward for approval.

Training in the curriculum management system deserves extra attention. This is because most curriculum documents and curriculum activity is housed within this system, and the necessary technology-based training is considerably different from other curriculum training. As such, the curriculum management system is the focal point for almost all curriculum-related activity, from the development of a new course or revision of an existing course to the technical review process to the final approval by the curriculum committee. As with other forms of training, almost everyone on a campus should have some basic training in using this system. Additionally, most faculty and administrators, as well as some staff, should understand the workings of the development and revision processes within the system. Of course, curriculum committee members, technical review committee members, and others directly related to curriculum will need to understand all aspects of the curriculum management system, particularly the approval process.

Training on the basic requirements for submitting curriculum to the Chancellor's Office is necessary for everyone. However, beyond these basics, certain members of the college curriculum team must understand the detailed requirements for submitting programs and

courses to the Chancellor's Office¹². These requirements are in addition to local and Title 5 requirements for program and course approval. Depending on the local curriculum process, the responsibility for submitting curriculum to the Chancellor's Office is often delegated to individuals in positions such as the curriculum specialist, curriculum chair, dean of curriculum, or other appropriate individuals.

The Chancellor's Office requires that all new course and program proposals be submitted electronically to the Curriculum Inventory upon approval by the local governing board. Typically, this submission is done by the curriculum specialist. At those colleges that do not have curriculum specialists, the CIO and curriculum chair should work together to identify which individuals at the college should have the access needed to make submissions to the Curriculum Inventory. These users will need ongoing professional development and training in order to be informed and stay current on the CCC Curriculum Inventory, Management Information Systems data elements, and other program and course approval requirements. Furthermore, the curriculum committee membership should also be provided some level of professional development and training on the Curriculum Inventory, MIS data elements and the Chancellor's Office program, and course approval requirements. By understanding the complexities of program and course approval beyond the requirements of the local process, a curriculum committee can help to facilitate efficiency of the entire curriculum approval process.

¹² Details on all of this information can be found in the *Program and Course Approval Handbook*. At the time of the drafting of this paper, the 5th edition of the *Program and Course Approval Handbook* was the edition in effect (http://extranet.cccco.edu/Portals/1/AA/ProgramCourseApproval/Handbook_5thEd_BOGapproved.pdf). It is expected that the 6th edition will be completed approved by the Board of Governors by summer 2016.

Training does not need to be a complicated process. An individual that is experienced and knowledgeable in curriculum can conduct training on a one-on-one or small group basis. The trainers, in these cases, can be mentors within divisions or departments, curriculum committee members, curriculum staff, or anyone with the necessary knowledge and the time to help. This individualized attention is often the most effective way to train, as it allows for a more streamlined approach to the material. In addition, the ASCCC regularly provides professional development opportunities in these areas through its regional meetings, institutes and plenary sessions, and assistance to local curriculum committees as requested.

Finally, colleges should establish and sustain a formal, continuous curriculum training plan. Such a plan, which should encompass both the development and approval of curriculum, can ensure a broad understanding of the curriculum processes not just among the faculty but also among all constituent groups. No matter the format of the professional development, the training should ensure that the college's curriculum processes work effectively and efficiently. With consistent and effective implementation of its curriculum training plan, the college will be well-positioned to ensure that its curriculum process is not dependent on a few knowledgeable people and that it operates effectively over the long term.

Resources for Effective Curriculum Processes

In order for the curriculum process to operate smoothly and effectively, the college must have a curriculum team that works closely with the CIO on curricular matters. This team

should include, at a minimum, the curriculum chair, the articulation officer, and the curriculum specialist. The curriculum team performs numerous critical functions during program and course development while also making sure that policies, regulations, and guidelines are being followed and interpreted correctly. In many cases, the individuals on the curriculum team work extra hours and do work above and beyond their minimum job duties. Thus, in order to ensure the effective operation of the curriculum process, local senates should advocate for sufficient resources, such as reassigned time, compensation, and funding for professional development, to be provided to these key members of the college's curriculum team.

The Curriculum Chair

The primary faculty leader in matters of curriculum is the curriculum chair or faculty co-chair depending on the curriculum committee structure. The curriculum chair is tasked with assuring that the local curriculum processes are functioning well so that curriculum proposals move through the process in a timely manner and with providing leadership to the college on curricular matters by working effectively with the local academic senate, the college administration, faculty, and staff. Typical duties for a curriculum chair include leading the curriculum committee and planning its agendas for the year, providing orientation and training to curriculum committee members, keeping informed on curriculum developments at the local and state level, and working with discipline faculty and the technical reviewers to facilitate moving curriculum proposals through the process. A more comprehensive list of typical curriculum chair duties is provided in Appendix C.

The primary method of compensation for curriculum chairs is reassigned time. The long-standing position of the Academic Senate states that curriculum chairs receive reassigned time as a good practice. In its paper *The Curriculum Committee, Role Structure, Duties and Standards of Good Practice* (Fall 1996, p.7), the Academic Senate states, “Reassigned time is appropriate in principle, is cost-effective (especially when replacement is at hourly adjunct rates of pay), and is good practice. In addition, more reassigned time is appropriate when the curriculum committee has an expanded and active role in program review, policy and budget development, and in college governance.” Reassignment from regular faculty duties must be sufficient to allow the curriculum chair to perform his or her expected duties.

The Articulation Officer

The college articulation officer plays a critical role in assuring that curriculum development is not only done effectively but is also done in the best interests of the students. The articulation officer is knowledgeable about transfer requirements and is a key advisor to faculty and the curriculum committee on how curriculum proposals can affect course-to-course articulation and acceptance of courses for general education credit by receiving institutions. The articulation officer plays a key role in the technical review of course and program proposals in identifying potential issues that may affect student transfer and ensuring that they are addressed. Beyond involvement in the curriculum process, the articulation officer is responsible for assuring that courses are submitted for articulation and that articulation agreements are kept up to date, for submitting courses

for approval to be included in the Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC) and the California State University General Education-Breadth (CSU GE-Breadth) general education patterns, and for submitting course outlines to the Course Identification Numbering System (C-ID) for review and approval. The duties of the articulation officer, much of which involves working on an individual basis with faculty, are extensive (see Appendix C) and critical for ensuring that transfer mission of the college is fulfilled.

The Curriculum Specialist

Many colleges employ classified staff as full-time curriculum specialists. Typical duties of the curriculum specialist that directly impact the curriculum process include coordination of the operation of the curriculum approval process and preparation of the curriculum development calendar for each year, preparation of materials for curriculum committee and governing board meetings, assistance in operational support for the technical review process, and submission of locally approved curriculum to the Chancellor's Office. The curriculum specialist provides valuable technical support for the curriculum chair, which allows the curriculum chair more time to focus on working with faculty to move their proposals through the process effectively and in a timely manner. The curriculum specialist may also be responsible for the day-to-day operations related to curriculum, including maintaining and ensuring the accuracy of curriculum-related publications, such as the college catalog and schedule of classes, and for entering curriculum data elements into the local information management system¹³. Curriculum specialists can provide the “big picture” view to the curriculum committee and discipline

¹³ A more extensive list of curriculum specialist responsibilities is provided in Appendix C.

faculty beyond the curriculum approval process itself and thus can identify issues that may adversely affect curriculum approval that may not be evident to the faculty.

Because of ongoing changes regarding curriculum at both the local and state levels, colleges must provide resources beyond reassigned time that allow for ongoing professional development of the college's curriculum team. Professional development funding is essential and should be budgeted and made available for the curriculum chair, articulation officer, curriculum specialist, and others to attend events that provide the professional development needed to ensure that the knowledge and skills of the curriculum team members are up to date. Examples of such events include the ASCCC Curriculum Institute, Plenary Sessions and regional meetings, the CIO Conferences, and the UC and CSU conferences for counselors and articulation officers. Finally, the following statement from the 1996 ASCCC paper *The Curriculum Committee, Role Structure, Duties and Standards of Good Practice* still applies today: "The implication for good standards that result from an expanded role for the faculty in curriculum development and renewal is clear: the curriculum committee and its chair require adequate reassigned time, secretarial support, and budget for supplies and equipment."

Distance Education Separate Approval

The curriculum committee bears an important responsibility for ensuring the quality of distance education (DE) courses. Per Title 5 §55206 proposals to offer courses through distance education must undergo a separate or additional review and approval. This practice ensures that courses offered through distance education meet the requirements for regular and effective contact for distance education courses as defined in title 5

§55204 and U.S. Department of Education regulation 34 CFR §600.2¹⁴. Additionally, colleges need to ensure that distance education students are provided the same support as face-to-face students, particularly for counseling, financial aid, library services, and tutoring, and that the courses are accessible to students with disabilities. The responsibility for conducting the required separate approval of distance education proposals is typically delegated to the curriculum committee.

Regular and effective contact is an academic and professional matter per Title 5 § 55204, and therefore the establishment of policies and procedures for assuring that distance education courses meet the requirements for regular and effective contact requires collegial consultation with local senates. The means by which a proposal to offer a course through distance education is brought to the curriculum committee is a local matter, and the details of effective practices ensuring a proposal reflects sound distance education practice is beyond the scope of this paper. However, a common practice is to use a DE addendum to the course outline of record to demonstrate how instructors teaching in the DE modality will ensure regular and effective contact with their students while maintaining the quality standards for the course established in the course outline of record.

Before faculty develop proposals to offer courses through DE, the college should provide what regular and effective contact is and what constitute effective practices for ensuring regular and effective contact. The college DE coordinator and DE committee are valuable

¹⁴ The U.S. Department of Education and regional accreditors such as ACCJC use the term “regular and substantive interaction.”

resources for accomplishing this and should work cooperatively with the curriculum committee to ensure that the curriculum review process promotes sound practices in distance education.

An important member of the curriculum technical review team is the DE Coordinator or an appropriate DE expert. When faculty initiate a proposal for a course to be taught in a DE modality, the faculty should work with the DE Coordinator early in the development process in order to identify potential issues with the DE proposal before it is submitted for technical review and action by the curriculum committee. Approving a course for online delivery is a different matter from approving an individual class to be taught online. The former is specifically a curriculum issue addressed by the curriculum committee through the separate course approval process and includes the evaluation of the means by which the class will ensure regular and effective contact. The latter, by contrast, is about the assessment of quality of the instructional design of an individual instructor's online course and whether or not it meets the requirement of assuring regular and effective contact established by the curriculum committee.

All DE courses must be accessible to students with disabilities and thus must comply with the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, specifically Section 508, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. Therefore, the faculty proposing the course should work with a learning disabilities specialist to ensure that the DE proposal reasonably meets legally mandated accessibility requirements.

Finally, because the curriculum committee is required to separately review and approve all distance education proposals, the college should provide training to the curriculum committee on the legal requirements and effective practices for regular and effective contact and compliance with accessibility requirements. This training will allow the curriculum committee to critically review DE proposals for both compliance and quality.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Under Title 5 §53200 which defines the purview of the local academic senate, curriculum, including the policies and procedures for approving curriculum proposals, is an academic and professional matter of faculty primacy. Because of the mission of the California Community Colleges and the relationship between the colleges and their external stakeholders, external stakeholders such as industry partners may sometimes call for changes to the processes for designing, approving, and delivering curriculum. While external pressures may be an impetus for reviewing and revising curriculum approval processes, they should not be the primary reason for doing so. Faculty, through their local academic senates and curriculum committees, must take the primary leadership role and exercise their collective professional responsibility to ensure the effectiveness of their local curriculum approval processes. Working together, and for the benefit of students, local academic senates and curriculum committees should regularly review, evaluate, and revise as needed the local curriculum approval processes to ensure the process is a collaborative and collegial process that is efficient and effective and ensures that the highest standards for curricular quality and rigor are met.

Recommendations for Local Senates:

- Review and evaluate the effectiveness of local curriculum processes.
- Ensure that local senate purview over curriculum and the connection between the local senate and the curriculum committee are well-understood.
- Ensure that the curriculum committee structure includes a diverse array of faculty, academic administrators, students, and staff that can provide a variety of expertise and perspectives without weakening faculty primacy over curriculum.
- Ensure that the process for the initiation of new curriculum and revisions to existing curriculum is clear, the technical review process is streamlined and effective, and curriculum committee meetings are run efficiently.
- Streamline the curriculum approval process by ensuring a sufficient frequency of curriculum approval opportunities by the curriculum committee and the governing board, establishing an expedited approval process for time-sensitive proposals, and providing individual colleges in multi-college districts autonomy over their curriculum.
- Provide professional development at the appropriate level for faculty, administrators, students, and staff, with more detailed training provided to those most closely involved with the local curriculum process.
- Advocate for sufficient resources to support the work of the college curriculum team, including reassigned time or additional compensation, and for the provision of ongoing funding and access to professional development opportunities.

- Ensure that faculty initiators of distance education proposals are provided with professional development on effective practices for ensuring regular and effective contact and compliance with accessibility requirements.

DRAFT

References and Resources

The Curriculum Committee, Role Structure, Duties and Standards of Good Practice, Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (Adopted Fall 1996)
http://asccc.org/sites/default/files/publications/Curriculum_0.pdf

Ensuring the Appropriate Use of Educational Technology: An Update for Local Academic Senates, Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (Adopted Spring 2008)
http://asccc.org/sites/default/files/publications/Educational_Technology_0.pdf

The Course Outline of Record: A Curriculum Reference Guide, Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (Adopted Spring 2008)
http://asccc.org/sites/default/files/publications/Curriculum-paper_0.pdf

CIO Manual: Overview & Responsibilities, California Community Colleges Chief Instructional Officers (July 16, 2012)
<http://ccccio.org/documents/CIOManual01-05-2013.pdf>

Program and Course Approval Handbook, 5th Edition, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (2013)
http://extranet.cccco.edu/Portals/1/AA/ProgramCourseApproval/Handbook_5thEd_BOG_approved.pdf

California Articulation Policies and Procedures Handbook, California Intersegmental Articulation Council (Revised Spring 2013)
http://ciac.csusb.edu/documents/CIAC_Handbook_Spring_2013.pdf

Ensuring Effective and Efficient Curriculum Processes – An Academic Senate White Paper, Academic Senate for California Community Colleges Executive Committee (Fall 2015)
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Standards, Policies and Procedures for Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum, Version 1.6, Intersegmental Council of Academic Senates (Approved June 5, 2015)
http://icas-ca.org/Websites/icasca/images/IGETC_Standards_version_1.6_final.pdf

CIO Manual: Overview and Responsibilities, California Community Colleges Chief Instructional Officers (Approved July 16, 2012)
<http://ccccio.org/documents/CIOManual01-05-2013.pdf>

Report of the Task Force on Workforce, Job Creation, and a Strong Economy, Board of Governors (Approved November 16, 2015)

http://doingwhatmatters.cccco.edu/portals/6/docs/sw/BOG_TaskForce_Report_v12_web.pdf

Distance Education Guidelines: Omnibus Version, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (Issued 2008)

http://extranet.cccco.edu/Portals/1/AA/DE/de_guidelines_081408.pdf

Distance Education Accessibility Guidelines For Students with Disabilities, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (Issued January 2011)

<http://extranet.cccco.edu/Portals/1/AA/DE/2011DistanceEducationAccessibilityGuidelines%20FINAL.pdf>

ASCCC California Community Colleges Curriculum website – provides numerous curriculum-related resources for curriculum committees and local senates.

<http://www.ccccurriculum.net>

United States Access Board – Information about Section 508 compliance

<https://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/communications-and-it/about-the-section-508-standards/background>

Course Identification Numbering System (C-ID) – Various C-ID resources for the field

<https://c-id.net/resources.html>

California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office List of MIS Course Data Elements:

<http://extranet.cccco.edu/Divisions/TechResearchInfoSys/MIS/DED/Course.aspx>

Chancellor's Office Curriculum and Instruction Unit Website (includes various useful guides):

<http://extranet.cccco.edu/Divisions/AcademicAffairs/CurriculumandInstructionUnit/Curriculum.aspx>

Appendix A – Staff Summary of the Results of the Spring 2015 ASCCC Curriculum Efficiency and Communication Survey

In response to Resolution 9.01 S15, the ASCCC Curriculum Committee drafted and distributed a survey on Curriculum Efficiency and Communications to the field in late spring of 2015. The survey was distributed to curriculum chairs and chief instructional officers. The survey results provide a snapshot in time of the nature of curriculum approval processes in the California community colleges. Below is the summary of survey results and findings prepared by ASCCC staff.

Curriculum Efficiency and Communication Survey Summary

The efficiency of local curriculum processes is undergoing a significant level of scrutiny as the ability of individual colleges to respond quickly to the changing curricular needs of its community becomes a concern for internal and external system stakeholders. Certainly improvements can be made to our curricular procedures, but to determine if a widespread problem exists and where the barriers or impediments may occur within the process, the ASCCC surveyed Curriculum Chairs and Chief Instructional Officers about local curriculum processes. This survey received 143 responses.

Over half of respondents (58%) are part of a multi-college district, while the remaining 42% of respondents are not. Fifty-six percent of respondents said their district has common/coordinated curriculum (CORs, numbers, etc.), but 44% do not. Less than half of respondents (44%) said approval by the District Curriculum Committee is part of their college's curriculum approval process. The remaining 56% said it is not.

Respondents were asked to describe the composition of their curriculum committee. Many included faculty representatives (elected members from each instructional division, Academic Senate representatives, Librarian), advisory members (Articulation Officer, Curriculum Specialist, CIO, Curriculum/SLO/Basic Skills/Distance Education Coordinators), administrators (VPI, VPAA, Academic Deans, CTE representative, A&R representative), and classified staff (Instruction Office Coordinator, note taker). Most commonly, one to two faculty members from each division serve as designated voters. In other cases, administrators, advisory members, and student representatives also have voting rights.

The majority of respondents (61%) said curriculum at their college goes to the governing board each month. About 11% said this occurs each semester (or quarter), 1% said annually and 27% selected other. Other responses included: every two weeks; three to five times a year; every Academic Senate meeting; as needed; and currently under discussion.

Most respondents (77%) said it typically takes less than six months to get curriculum through their local process once it is ready to be reviewed by the curriculum committee and culminating with local governing board approval. One respondent noted that,

although his/her college takes less than six months, it takes two semesters after the course has been approved before it can be taught. Of the remaining respondents, 18% said it takes 6 to 11 months, 3% said 1 to 2 years, and 2% said more than two years. A respondent noted that he/she has been working on several programs for three years.

Respondents were asked to outline their curriculum approval process from course submission to local governing board approval. While there are several variations of this process, especially in multi-college districts, it is most often described as follows: A faculty initiator develops and submits curriculum for review, often via CurricUNET or a similar curriculum management system. Department representatives and/or the curriculum committee review the submission and suggest revisions. The initiator makes the requested edits and submits the proposal to the curriculum committee for the first reading. If approved, the proposal will be added to the consent agenda for a second reading and action. If not, the proposal is returned to the initiator for further revision. If approved at the second reading, the Curriculum Committee will submit the proposal for approval by the Senate and then the local governing board. Once approved by the board, coursework is submitted to the Chancellor's Office for processing.

Nearly all respondents (95%) said their committee has a technical review process, but about 5% do not. Many respondents said their college has a technical review committee or organized group, often comprised of the curriculum dean, curriculum chair, CIO, articulation officer, faculty, and the library specialist. Others said the curriculum committee reviews the proposals via CurricUNET. In some cases, the technical review committee is independent of the curriculum committee and in other cases it is a sub-committee. The majority of respondents (86%) said it typically takes a faculty member less than six months to prepare curriculum for technical review. About 8% said 6 to 11 months and 6% said more than 2 years. Two respondents noted that this time frame can vary significantly depending on faculty responsiveness to change requests.

Sixty-seven percent of respondents said the senate delegated authority to their curriculum committee for final recommendation to the local governing board. Twelve percent said the senate did not and about 21% said mostly. Respondents explained that, although, the senate has the authority to make the final recommendation, it very rarely disapproves of the recommendations of the curriculum committee. Some noted that curriculum approvals are included at Senate meetings only as a formality. Another respondent said only major policy changes require Senate approval and regular course/program approval is delegated to the curriculum committee.

Respondents from multi-college districts were asked to describe the relationship between their local senates, district senate (if one exists), and curriculum committees. While there are several variations of this process, a few were described as follows: Some colleges have a senate and curriculum committee at both the local and district level, but each college within their district works independently. For others, curriculum is approved by the local curriculum committee and senate first, and then by the district curriculum committee and senate. The district senate makes the final recommendation to the board. Other respondents said they have a district curriculum committee, but not a district

senate. In this case, the district curriculum committee makes the final recommendation to the board.

When asked if regular training is provided for faculty on the curriculum committee, 16 respondents said no, but the majority of respondents said yes. Most said a review/orientation is held at the start of each year (or semester) and other trainings are scheduled throughout the year, either regularly or on an as-needed basis. Respondents said their colleges provide trainings on prerequisites, submissions, approvals, technical review, Title 5 regulations, COR, PCAH, Basic Skills, EdCode, CTE, and continuing education. Some also said their college holds stand-alone trainings; however, several respondents noted that this type of training is less common as it is no longer required. Respondents said committee members are provided with a curriculum handbook and other helpful materials. Additionally, they are encouraged to attend FLEX trainings, the Curriculum Institute, and other professional development workshops as well.

Respondents were asked if regular training opportunities are provided for faculty to write curriculum. Thirty-seven respondents said no; however, 77 respondents said yes. Many said workshops and/or one-on-one training sessions are regularly available to faculty. One-on-one trainings are often conducted by a Curriculum Chair, committee member, coordinator, technician, etc. Some said trainings are held at department meetings, either on a regular or as-needed basis. Others also noted that video tutorials, handouts, and handbooks are provided as helpful resources.

When asked what curriculum management software their college uses, the majority of respondents (70%) said CurricUNET. About 2% said WebCMS and 17% said their software is locally developed. The remaining 13% of respondents selected other. Of those that selected other, six respondents said their colleges complete the process manually, but some are implementing CurricUNET soon. Four respondents said their colleges are in the process of transitioning from a locally developed software to CurricUNET. Three others said their colleges are moving away from CurricUNET due to several operational issues.

Respondents were asked to describe the strategies their campuses use to communicate curriculum changes to faculty and the college community at large. Many said they receive reports via email from either the Curriculum Chair or the Department Chair/Representative. Others said they are updated at Academic Senate or department meetings. Agendas, meeting minutes, and the college catalog are also available on the campus website as resources.

When asked what is most efficient about their college's curriculum process, most respondents said regular, organized and productive committee meetings. Having an efficient curriculum management system, particularly CurricUNET, and a streamlined technical review process were also frequently mentioned. Other responses included: strong communication, regular faculty training, and experienced curriculum chairs/co-chairs/specialists. When asked what is least efficient about the process, respondents said the volume of course proposals in queue and timeliness of faculty revisions. Many

explained that the workload is overwhelming and the process for faculty to review and revise submissions can be lengthy. It was also noted that there are issues with curriculum management systems, particularly CurricUNET. Some respondents said the system has several glitches and is not user friendly. Others are also concerned with the lack of faculty training opportunities, as well as poor communication at both the local and state level.

Respondents were asked what their top three concerns were about developing or modifying curriculum or programs. The timeliness of the state submission and approval process, with particular attention to CTE, was mentioned most often as a top concern. The next two top concerns were C-ID compliance and constant changes to regulations and legislation. Other popular issues included: ADT processes; lack of faculty training; volume of work; poor communication of approved changes; CurricUNET; and credit hour/unit regulations.

Appendix B – Accreditation Eligibility Requirements and Standards Applicable to Curriculum

Accreditation requirements play a large role in supporting colleges to establish efficient and effective curriculum processes. The Eligibility Requirements (ER), Standards, and Commission Policies require that institutions (colleges) provide a catalog that includes accurate information on facts, policies, requirements, and procedures.

Standard I.C.2 states that the institution must provide a print or online catalog for students and prospective students with precise, accurate, and current information on all facts, requirements, policies, and procedures listed in the “Catalog Requirements” (see endnote). (ER 20)

The words, “precise, accurate, and current” make it clear that the curriculum development and approval processes must be effective and efficient.

ER 20 mandates that the catalog must contain the following:

- Course, Program, and Degree Offerings
- Student Learning Outcomes for Programs and Degrees
- Academic Calendar and Program Length

Accreditation Standards from section II.A are specific to maintaining current, relevant, and high quality curriculum. All elements of the curriculum are covered here such as expected practices in higher education in regard to depth, breadth, and rigor; program length and course sequencing; and general education.

II.A.2 Faculty, including full time, part time, and adjunct faculty, ensure that the content and methods of instruction meet generally accepted academic and professional standards and expectations. **Faculty and others responsible act to continuously improve instructional courses, programs** and directly related services through systematic evaluation to assure currency, improve teaching and learning strategies, and promote student success.

II.A.3 The institution identifies and regularly assesses learning outcomes for courses, programs, certificates and degrees using established institutional procedures. The institution has officially approved and current course outlines that include student learning outcomes. **In every class section students receive a course syllabus that includes learning outcomes from the institution's officially approved course outline.**

II.A.5 The institution's degrees and programs follow practices common to American higher education, including appropriate length, breadth, depth, rigor, course sequencing, time to completion, and synthesis of learning. The institution ensures that minimum degree requirements are 60 semester credits or equivalent at the associate level, and 120 semester credits or equivalent at the baccalaureate level. (ER 12)

II.A.6 The institution schedules courses in a manner that allows students to complete certificate and degree programs within a period of time consistent with established expectations in higher education. (ER 9)

II.A.11 The institution includes in all of its programs, student learning outcomes, appropriate to the program level, in communication competency, information competency, quantitative competency, analytic inquiry skills, ethical reasoning, the ability to engage diverse perspectives, and other program-specific learning outcomes.

II.A.12 The institution requires of all of its degree programs a component of general education based on a carefully considered philosophy for both associate and baccalaureate degrees that is clearly stated in its catalog. The institution, relying on faculty expertise, determines the appropriateness of each course for inclusion in the general education curriculum, based upon student learning outcomes and competencies appropriate to the degree level. The learning outcomes include a student's preparation for and acceptance of responsible participation in civil society, skills for lifelong learning and application of learning, and a broad comprehension of the development of knowledge, practice, and interpretive approaches in the arts and humanities, the sciences, mathematics, and social sciences. (ER 12)

II.A.13 All degree programs include focused study in at least one area of inquiry or in an established interdisciplinary core. The identification of specialized courses in an area of inquiry or in an established interdisciplinary core is based upon student learning outcomes and competencies, and include mastery, at the appropriate degree level, of key theories and practices within the field of study.

II.A.14 Graduates completing career-technical certificates and degrees demonstrate technical and professional competencies that meet employment standards and other applicable standards and preparation for external licensure and certification.

II.A.16 The institution regularly evaluates and improves the quality and currency of all instructional programs offered in the name of the institution, including collegiate, pre-collegiate, career-technical, and continuing and community education courses and programs, regardless of delivery mode or location. The institution systematically strives to improve programs and courses to enhance learning outcomes and achievement for students.

The next two standards are met through the establishment of the college and/or district curriculum committee(s).

Standard III.A.2 includes the following statement: Faculty job descriptions include development and review of curriculum as well as assessment of learning.

In Standard IV.A.4 it states that Faculty and academic administrators, through policy and procedures, and through well-defined structures, have responsibility for recommendations about curriculum and student learning programs and services.

Appendix C – Typical Duties for Curriculum Chairs, Articulation Officers and Curriculum Specialists

Curriculum Chairs

In its paper *The Curriculum Committee, Role Structure, Duties and Standards of Good Practice* (Fall 1996), the Academic Senate identifies the following typical duties of the Curriculum Chair. Local practices may vary:

- Prepare agendas.
- Conduct the committee meetings.
- Edit minutes.
- Set the calendar of committee meetings.
- Keep informed of curriculum standards including title 5, the Program and Course Approval Handbook (formerly the Curriculum Standards Handbook), intersegmental, and accreditation.
- Supervise the orientation of new members and on-going training of continuing members.
- Assist discipline faculty in the curriculum development process (usually with a faculty curriculum committee member from that division).
- Assure that committee function take place smoothly: technical review, pre-requisite review, distance education review, general education review, library sign-off, articulation, and program review reports are submitted to the committee and reported regularly to the academic senate.
- Sign off on final versions of curriculum recommendations to the board.
- Sign off on IGETC and CSU-GE Breadth submittal forms

- Review catalog drafts for concurrence with approved changes.

Additional duties not outlined in the paper may also include:

- Work with the CIO and/or curriculum dean in order to ensure smooth communication between the faculty and administration regarding program needs.
- Review certificates and degrees for submission to the Chancellor's Office
- Review local courses to align with C-ID developed courses if necessary.
- Ensure distance education and Chancellor's Office documents are part of the course in the college's course management system.

Articulation Officers

According to the *California Articulation Policies and Procedures Handbook* (2013, p.6) by the California Intersegmental Articulation Council the Articulation Officer is expected to:

- Serve as an advocate for the transfer student and, through the articulation process, seek to ease the student's transition.
- Be a well-informed resource person for students, campus faculty, administration, counseling/advising staff, and transfer center personnel on transfer curriculum, articulation, and related matters.
- Disseminate current, accurate, articulation data to students, staff, appropriate departments, and campuses.
- Serve on appropriate campus committees such as General Education, Curriculum, Academic Policies, and Catalog to provide input and to receive information about proposed changes in campus policy and curriculum.

- Serve as a consultant to faculty, academic, and student services units, providing needed materials and information about course articulation proposals and acceptances.
- Facilitate campus participation in intersegmental programs such as C-ID, regional transfer fairs, and Intersegmental Coordinating Council (ICC) activities.
- Monitor each stage of the articulation process and follow up with department and faculty for timely responses and decisions
- Manage and update campus articulation data and provide an annual summary of transfer-related curricular changes for both internal and external recipients.
- Be a gatekeeper of course outlines, IGETC, CSU GE, baccalaureate lists, UC Transfer Course Agreements (TCA) Lists, ASSIST, and other articulation-related data.
- Serve as an advocate for the faculty and campus academic programs.
- Serve as a moderator and mediator of problems or disagreements between the faculties of the home campus and the articulating institutions.

Curriculum Specialists

Below are examples of job descriptions and duties for curriculum specialists in the Imperial Community College District and the Ventura County Community College District. These are provided for information only and not as an endorsement by the ASCCC.

IMPERIAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

CLASS TITLE: CURRICULUM & ACADEMIC SYSTEMS SPECIALIST

BASIC FUNCTION:

Under the direction of the Vice President for Academic Services, or designee, provide highly responsible, complex, and sensitive administrative and technical support; coordinate and maintain curriculum databases; serve as technical resource to faculty and administrators in preparation of curriculum proposals to assure compliance with State and local rules, regulations and policies; plan and coordinate the development and publishing of the college catalog; assist faculty and staff on scheduling processes and procedures; serve as a liaison to the Chancellor's Office for curriculum related matters.

REPRESENTATIVE DUTIES:

The following duties are typical for this classification. Incumbents may not perform all of the listed duties and/or may be required to perform additional or different duties from those set forth below to address business needs and changing business practices.

Organize and manage the day-to-day activities of the assigned area to assure efficient and effective operations; coordinate communications; perform complex, specialized and responsible administrative and technical duties related to the assigned area.

Plan, organize and coordinate the preparation of the college catalog; update degree audit system accordingly; update database to assure compliance with changes relevant to student academic progress; update, maintain, and facilitate changes in computer data base. Establish and meet timelines; maintain currency of information in the catalog; coordinate publishing and serve as editor for the college catalog.

Monitor catalog regarding degree and certificate requirements; course additions and deletions; course numbers, titles, content and unit values; update degree audit systems accordingly.

Provide information on and interpretation of policies, procedures and regulations; explain and disseminate Title V regulations to divisions, administrator, faculty, and staff; compare and contrast changes to Title V regulations and make appropriate adjustments to materials and other resources as required.

Assist in the development and maintenance of the class schedule; serve as primary backup to scheduler.

Research, analyze and evaluate a wide variety of issues, data, recommendations and alternatives; use independent judgment to develop and provide recommendations, suggestions or information as appropriate.

Receive and transcribe dictation of letters and memoranda, including material of a confidential nature; prepare correspondence and memoranda independently or from oral instructions.

Type a wide variety of materials such as correspondence, reports, forms, applications, memoranda, letters of recommendation and other documents.

Initiate and answer telephone calls; screen and direct calls and visitors to appropriate personnel; schedule and confirm appointments and meetings; arrange travel accommodations for assigned area as necessary.

Maintain a variety of complex files and records; maintain budget and other financial records related to assigned area, as necessary.

Compile information and data for reports and assist in the preparation of statistical and narrative reports; conduct research as required.

Inspect documents, forms, records and other materials for accuracy and completeness; process a variety of forms and documents according to established procedures; assure conformance to established guidelines and standards.

Prepare agenda items for meetings; take and transcribe minutes and distribute to appropriate personnel.

Assure that Board agenda items and supporting documents are developed, prepared and forwarded within college timelines and legal guidelines.

Maintain confidentiality of records and information, including information regarding Board, District, personnel, student or controversial matters.

Compose correspondence independently; format, type, proofread, duplicate and distribute correspondence, notices, lists, forms, memoranda and other materials according to established procedures and standards.

Coordinate communication and activities with other District departments and personnel, students, educational institutions, vendors, other outside organizations and the public.

Operate a variety of office equipment including microcomputer, calculator, copy machine, facsimile machine and dictation equipment; input and retrieve computerized data.

Train and provide work direction and guidance to others as assigned; coordinate workflow to assure the proper and timely completion of work.

Perform related duties as assigned.

VENTURA COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT CLASS TITLE:

CURRICULUM TECHNICIAN

(Established October 2010)

CLASSIFIED

BASIC FUNCTION:

Under the direction of an assigned supervisor, coordinate, prioritize, and organize activities related to curriculum changes, production and maintenance of the college catalog, and related state reporting.

REPRESENTATIVE DUTIES:

Coordinate the preparation and distribution of the Curriculum Committee materials, agenda, and minutes.

Establish timelines and coordinate the production and printing of the college catalog; compile, organize, and integrate input from divisions and departments pertaining to catalog content; proofread submitted materials for accuracy and consistency.

Assist in the management of academic services data, information, and materials; input data into the online curriculum database; monitor data for compliance with state and college regulations.

Coordinate and facilitate the submission of curricula and programs to the California Community College system office; assist with the management of curriculum inventory both at the state and local levels.

Maintain a wide variety of records and data, including articulation agreements, library resources of college catalogs pertaining to articulation and curriculum transfer, and articulation records related to Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), College-Level Educational Program (CLEP), Tech Prep (Perkins), and Credit-by-Exam.

Coordinate and facilitate the submission of articulation materials to appropriate state agencies, including the University of California Office of the President for the UC Transfer Course Agreement, the California State University Chancellor's Office for CSU GE-Breadth, Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC), and Articulation System Stimulating Interinstitutional Student Transfer (ASSIST).

Participate in development and implementation of new information systems and processes designed to support curriculum functions; pursue resolutions to any identified problems.

Serve as an informational resource regarding curriculum issues, responding to requests, inquiries, and questions from administrators, faculty, staff and students.

Research information; create queries, compile data and prepare a wide variety of periodic and special statistical reports related to instructional activities, curriculum, and related matters.

May provide administrative assistance to assigned supervisor. Perform related duties as assigned.

KNOWLEDGE AND ABILITIES:

KNOWLEDGE OF:

State directives, laws, rules, and regulations related to curriculum and articulation
Modern office practices, procedures, and equipment
Correct English usage, grammar, spelling, punctuation and vocabulary for report writing
District organization, operations, policies, goals, and objectives

Modern computer software applications, including word processing, database, and spreadsheet applications

Principles and procedures of record keeping

ABILITY TO:

Interpret and apply related laws, regulations, policies, and procedures
Communicate effectively, both orally and in writing
Establish and maintain comprehensive and accurate files and records
Prepare concise and complete reports as required

Adapt to changing policies and procedural requirements
Establish and maintain effective working relationships
Manage multiple projects simultaneously
Exhibit detail orientation in reviewing documentation and records
Prepare accurate reports, agendas, minutes, spreadsheets and other documents related to

scheduling, curriculum, and articulation

EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE:

Any combination equivalent to:

Education: Graduation from high school or evidence of equivalent educational proficiency. An associate degree is preferred.

Experience: Three years of technical clerical experience, including experience preparing minutes, proofreading documents, and maintaining records.

WORKING CONDITIONS:

ENVIRONMENT

Office environment

PHYSICAL ABILITIES

Seeing to inspect various documents, on-screen data spreadsheets Hearing and speaking to communicate with District staff Sitting for extended periods of time Dexterity of hands and fingers to operate a computer keyboard and other office equipment

Appendix D – Relevant Statutory and Regulatory Citations

California Education Code

§70902(b)(7) Establish procedures that are consistent with minimum standards established by the board of governors to ensure faculty, staff, and students the opportunity to express their opinions at the campus level, to ensure that these opinions are given every reasonable consideration, to ensure the right to participate effectively in district and college governance, and to ensure the right of academic senates to assume primary responsibility for making recommendations in the areas of curriculum and academic standards.

Title 5 Sections on Academic Senates

§53200 Definitions.

For the purpose of this Subchapter:

(a) “Faculty” means those employees of a community college district who are employed in positions that are not designated as supervisory or management for the purposes of Article 5 (commencing with Section 3540) of Chapter 10.7 of Division 4 of Title 1 of the Government Code, and for which minimum qualifications for hire are specified by the Board of Governors.

(b) “Academic senate,” “faculty council,” and “faculty senate” means an organization formed in accordance with the provisions of this Subchapter whose primary function, as the representative of the faculty, is to make recommendations to the administration of a college and to the governing board of a district with respect to academic and professional matters. For purposes of this Subchapter, reference to the term “academic senate” also constitutes reference to “faculty council” or “faculty senate.”

(c) “Academic and professional matters” means the following policy development and implementation matters:

- (1) curriculum, including establishing prerequisites and placing courses within disciplines;
 - (2) degree and certificate requirements;
 - (3) grading policies;
 - (4) educational program development;
 - (5) standards or policies regarding student preparation and success;
 - (6) district and college governance structures, as related to faculty roles;
 - (7) faculty roles and involvement in accreditation processes, including self-study and annual reports;
 - (8) policies for faculty professional development activities;
 - (9) processes for program review;
 - (10) processes for institutional planning and budget development; and
 - (11) other academic and professional matters as are mutually agreed upon between the governing board and the academic senate.
- (d) “Consult collegially” means that the district governing board shall develop policies on academic and professional matters through either or both of the following methods, according to its own discretion:

- (1) relying primarily upon the advice and judgment of the academic senate; or
- (2) agreeing that the district governing board, or such representatives as it may designate, and the representatives of the academic senate shall have the obligation to reach mutual agreement by written resolution, regulation, or policy of the governing board effectuating such recommendations.

§53202 Formation; Procedures; Membership.

The following procedure shall be used to establish an academic senate:

- (a) The full-time faculty of a community college shall vote by secret ballot to form an academic senate.
- (b) In multi-college districts, the full-time faculty of the district colleges may vote on whether or not to form a district academic senate. Such vote shall be by secret ballot.
- (c) The governing board of a district shall recognize the academic senate and authorize the faculty to:
 - (1) Fix and amend by vote of the full-time faculty the composition, structure, and procedures of the academic senate.
 - (2) Provide for the selection, in accordance with accepted democratic election procedures, the members of the academic senate.
- (d) The full-time faculty may provide for the membership and participation of part-time faculty members in the academic senate.
- (e) In the absence of any full-time faculty members in a community college, the part-time faculty of such community college may form an academic senate.

§53203 Powers.

- (a) The governing board of a community college district shall adopt policies for appropriate delegation of authority and responsibility to its college and/or district academic senate. Among other matters, said policies, at a minimum, shall provide that the governing board or its designees will consult collegially with the academic senate when adopting policies and procedures on academic and professional matters. This requirement to consult collegially shall not limit other rights and responsibilities of the academic senate which are specifically provided in statute or other Board of Governors regulations.
- (b) In adopting the policies and procedures described in Subsection (a), the governing board or its designees shall consult collegially with representatives of the academic senate.
- (c) While in the process of consulting collegially, the academic senate shall retain the right to meet with or to appear before the governing board with respect to the views, recommendations, or proposals of the senate. In addition, after consultation with the administration of the college and/or district, the academic senate may present its views and recommendations to the governing board.
- (d) The governing board of a district shall adopt procedures for responding to recommendations of the academic senate that incorporate the following:
 - (1) in instances where the governing board elects to rely primarily upon the advice and judgment of the academic senate, the recommendations of the senate will normally be accepted, and only in exceptional circumstances and for compelling reasons will the recommendations not be accepted. If a recommendation is not accepted, the governing board or its designee, upon request of the academic senate, shall promptly communicate

its reasons in writing to the academic senate.

(2) in instances where the governing board elects to provide for mutual agreement with the academic senate, and agreement has not been reached, existing policy shall remain in effect unless continuing with such policy exposes the district to legal liability or causes substantial fiscal hardship. In cases where there is no existing policy, or in cases where the exposure to legal liability or substantial fiscal hardship requires existing policy to be changed, the governing board may act, after a good faith effort to reach agreement, only for compelling legal, fiscal, or organizational reasons.

(e) An academic senate may assume such responsibilities and perform such functions as may be delegated to it by the governing board of the district pursuant to Subsection (a).

(f) The appointment of faculty members to serve on college or district committees, task forces, or other groups dealing with academic and professional matters, shall be made, after consultation with the chief executive officer or his or her designee, by the academic senate. Notwithstanding this Subsection, the collective bargaining representative may seek to appoint faculty members to committees, task forces, or other groups.

Title 5 Sections on Curriculum, Including Distance Education

§55002 Standards and Criteria for Courses.

(a) Degree-Applicable Credit Course. A degree-applicable credit course is a course which has been designated as appropriate to the associate degree in accordance with the requirements of section 55062, and which has been recommended by the college and/or district curriculum committee and approved by the district governing board as a collegiate course meeting the needs of the students.

(1) Curriculum Committee. The college and/or district curriculum committee recommending the course shall be established by the mutual agreement of the college and/or district administration and the academic senate. The committee shall be either a committee of the academic senate or a committee that includes faculty and is otherwise comprised in a way that is mutually agreeable to the college and/or district administration and the academic senate.

(2) Standards for Approval. The college and/or district curriculum committee shall recommend approval of the course for associate degree credit if it meets the following standards:

(A) Grading Policy. The course provides for measurement of student performance in terms of the stated course objectives and culminates in a formal, permanently recorded grade based upon uniform standards in accordance with section 55023. The grade is based on demonstrated proficiency in subject matter and the ability to demonstrate that proficiency, at least in part, by means of essays, or, in courses where the curriculum committee deems them to be appropriate, by problem solving exercises or skills demonstrations by students.

(B) Units. The course grants units of credit based upon a relationship specified by the governing board between the number of units assigned to the course and the number of lecture and/or laboratory hours or performance criteria specified in the course outline. The course also requires a minimum of three hours of student work per week, including class time for each unit of credit, prorated for short-term, extended term, laboratory

and/or activity courses.

(C) Intensity. The course treats subject matter with a scope and intensity that requires students to study independently outside of class time.

(D) Prerequisites and Corequisites. When the college and/or district curriculum committee determines, based on a review of the course outline of record, that a student would be highly unlikely to receive a satisfactory grade unless the student has knowledge or skills not taught in the course, then the course shall require prerequisites or corequisites that are established, reviewed, and applied in accordance with the requirements of this article.

(E) Basic Skills Requirements. If success in the course is dependent upon communication or computation skills, then the course shall require, consistent with the provisions of this article, as prerequisites or corequisites eligibility for enrollment in associate degree credit courses in English and/or mathematics, respectively.

(F) Difficulty. The course work calls for critical thinking and the understanding and application of concepts determined by the curriculum committee to be at college level.

(G) Level. The course requires learning skills and a vocabulary that the curriculum committee deems appropriate for a college course.

(3) Course Outline of Record. The course is described in a course outline of record that shall be maintained in the official college files and made available to each instructor. The course outline of record shall specify the unit value the expected number of contact hours for the course as a whole, the prerequisites, corequisites or advisories on recommended preparation (if any) for the course, the catalog description, objectives, and content in terms of a specific body of knowledge. The course outline shall also specify types or provide examples of required reading and writing assignments, other outside-of-class assignments, instructional methodology, and methods of evaluation for determining whether the stated objectives have been met by students.

(4) Conduct of Course. Each section of the course is to be taught by a qualified instructor in accordance with a set of objectives and with other specifications defined in the course outline of record.

(5) Repetition. Repeated enrollment is allowed only in accordance with the provisions of section 51002, article 4 (commencing with section 55040) of subchapter 1 of chapter 6, and section 58161.

(b) Nondegree-Applicable Credit Course. A credit course designated by the governing board as not applicable to the associate degree is a course which, at a minimum, is recommended by the college and/or district curriculum committee (the committee described and established under subdivision (a)(1) of this section) and is approved by the district governing board.

(1) Types of Courses. Nondegree-applicable credit courses are:

(A) nondegree-applicable basic skills courses as defined in subdivision (j) of section 55000;

(B) courses designed to enable students to succeed in degree-applicable credit courses (including, but not limited to, college orientation and guidance courses, and discipline-specific preparatory courses such as biology, history, or electronics) that integrate basic skills instruction throughout and assign grades partly upon the demonstrated mastery of those skills;

(C) precollegiate career technical preparation courses designed to provide foundation

skills for students preparing for entry into degree-applicable credit career technical courses or programs;

(D) essential career technical instruction for which meeting the standards of subdivision (a) is neither necessary nor required.

(2) Standards for Approval. The college and/or district curriculum committee shall recommend approval of the course on the basis of the standards which follow.

(A) Grading Policy. The course provides for measurement of student performance in terms of the stated course objectives and culminates in a formal, permanently recorded grade based upon uniform standards in accordance with section 55023. The grade is based on demonstrated proficiency in the subject matter and the ability to demonstrate that proficiency, at least in part, by means of written expression that may include essays, or, in courses where the curriculum committee deems them to be appropriate, by problem solving exercises or skills demonstrations by students.

(B) Units. The course grants units of credit based upon a relationship specified by the governing board between the number of units assigned to the course and the number of lecture and/or laboratory hours or performance criteria specified in the course outline. The course requires a minimum of three hours of student work per week, per unit, including class time and/or demonstrated competency, for each unit of credit, prorated for short-term, extended term, laboratory, and/or activity courses.

(C) Intensity. The course provides instruction in critical thinking and generally treats subject matter with a scope and intensity that prepares students to study independently outside of class time and includes reading and writing assignments and homework. In particular, the assignments will be sufficiently rigorous that students successfully completing each such course, or sequence of required courses, will have acquired the skills necessary to successfully complete degree-applicable work.

(D) Prerequisites and corequisites. When the college and/or district curriculum committee deems appropriate, the course may require prerequisites or corequisites for the course that are established, reviewed, and applied in accordance with this article.

(3) Course Outline of Record. The course is described in a course outline of record that shall be maintained in the official college files and made available to each instructor. The course outline of record shall specify the unit value, the expected number of contact hours for the course as a whole, the prerequisites, corequisites or advisories on recommended preparation (if any) for the course, the catalog description, objectives, and content in terms of a specific body of knowledge. The course outline shall also specify types or provide examples of required reading and writing assignments, other outside-of-class assignments, instructional methodology, and methods of evaluation for determining whether the stated objectives have been met by students. Taken together, these course specifications shall be such as to typically enable any student who successfully completes all of the assigned work prescribed in the outline of record to successfully meet the course objectives.

(4) Conduct of Course. All sections of the course are to be taught by a qualified instructor in accordance with a set of objectives and with other specifications defined in the course outline of record.

(5) Repetition. Repeated enrollment is allowed only in accordance with the provisions of section 51002, article 4 (commencing with section 55040) of subchapter 1 of chapter 6, and section 58161.

(c) Noncredit Course. A noncredit course is a course which, at a minimum, is recommended by the college and/or district curriculum committee (the committee described and established under subdivision (a)(1) of this section) and approved by the district governing board as a course meeting the needs of enrolled students.

(1) Standards for Approval. The college and/or district curriculum committee shall recommend approval of the course if the course treats subject matter and uses resource materials, teaching methods, and standards of attendance and achievement that the committee deems appropriate for the enrolled students. In order to be eligible for state apportionment, such courses must be approved by the Chancellor pursuant to article 2 (commencing with section 55150) of subchapter 2 of this chapter and satisfy the requirements of section 58160 and other applicable provisions of chapter 9 (commencing with section 58000) of this division.

(2) Course Outline of Record. The course is described in a course outline of record that shall be maintained in the official college files and made available to each instructor. The course outline of record shall specify the number of contact hours normally required for a student to complete the course, the catalog description, the objectives, contents in terms of a specific body of knowledge, instructional methodology, examples of assignments and/or activities, and methods of evaluation for determining whether the stated objectives have been met.

(3) Conduct of Course. All sections of the course are to be taught by a qualified instructor in accordance with the set of objectives and other specifications defined in the course outline of record.

(4) Repetition. Repeated enrollment is allowed only in accordance with provisions of section 58161.

(d) Community Services Offering. A community services offering must meet the following minimum requirements:

(1) is approved by the district governing board;

(2) is designed for the physical, mental, moral, economic, or civic development of persons enrolled therein;

(3) provides subject matter content, resource materials, and teaching methods which the district governing board deems appropriate for the enrolled students;

(4) is conducted in accordance with a predetermined strategy or plan;

(5) is open to all members of the community willing to pay fees to cover the cost of the offering; and

(6) may not be claimed for apportionment purposes.

§55202 Course Quality Standards.

The same standards of course quality shall be applied to any portion of a course conducted through distance education as are applied to traditional classroom courses, in regard to the course quality judgment made pursuant to the requirements of section 55002, and in regard to any local course quality determination or review process.

Determinations and judgments about the quality of distance education under the course quality standards shall be made with the full involvement of faculty in accordance with the provisions of subchapter 2 (commencing with section 53200) of chapter 2.

§55204 Instructor Contact.

In addition to the requirements of section 55002 and any locally established requirements applicable to all courses, district governing boards shall ensure that:

(a) Any portion of a course conducted through distance education includes regular effective contact between instructor and students, through group or individual meetings, orientation and review sessions, supplemental seminar or study sessions, field trips, library workshops, telephone contact, correspondence, voice mail, e-mail, or other activities. Regular effective contact is an academic and professional matter pursuant to sections 53200 et seq.

(b) Any portion of a course provided through distance education is conducted consistent with guidelines issued by the Chancellor pursuant to section 409 of the Procedures and Standing Orders of the Board of Governors.

§55206 Separate Course Approval.

If any portion of the instruction in a proposed or existing course or course section is designed to be provided through distance education in lieu of face-to-face interaction between instructor and student, the course shall be separately reviewed and approved according to the district's adopted course approval procedures.

United States Department of Education Regulations

34 CFR 600.2 Definitions

(Selected Federal definitions of relevance for curriculum committees)

Clock hour: A period of time consisting of—

- (1) A 50- to 60-minute class, lecture, or recitation in a 60-minute period;
- (2) A 50- to 60-minute faculty-supervised laboratory, shop training, or internship in a 60-minute period; or
- (3) Sixty minutes of preparation in a correspondence course.

Correspondence course: (1) A course provided by an institution under which the institution provides instructional materials, by mail or electronic transmission, including examinations on the materials, to students who are separated from the instructor. Interaction between the instructor and student is limited, is not regular and substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student. Correspondence courses are typically self-paced. (2) If a course is part correspondence and part residential training, the Secretary considers the course to be a correspondence course.

(3) A correspondence course is not distance education.

Credit hour: Except as provided in 34 CFR 668.8(k) and (l), a credit hour is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates not less than—

- (1) One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or ten to twelve weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or

(2) At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

Distance education means education that uses one or more of the technologies listed in paragraphs (1) through (4) of this definition to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor, either synchronously or asynchronously. The technologies may include—

- (1) The internet;
- (2) One-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices;
- (3) Audio conferencing; or
- (4) Video cassettes, DVDs, and CD-ROMs, if the cassettes, DVDs, or CD-ROMs are used in a course in conjunction with any of the technologies listed in paragraphs (1) through (3) of this definition.