Curriculum Development Guidelines
College of Arts and Sciences
2019 04 10

Principles

The College of Arts and Sciences is committed to preparing students for lifelong career success, engaged citizenship, and leadership in a global society. Intellectual and personal growth form the core of that preparation, and *curriculum* is the primary space where teaching, research, and creative work flow together to foster that growth. Robust liberal arts curricula set the conditions for life-transforming educational experiences, so we embrace the challenge to be transformative in our approach to curriculum development. Thus, curricular change in Arts and Sciences, from incremental single course changes to a new or revamped program, will be mission-guided, student-focused, faculty-driven, and research-informed.

Practices

A curriculum development proposal grows out of reflection, research, consultation, and collaboration. The scope and degree of these will be proportional to the scope and impact of the envisioned change. At minimum, proposals should be discussed and endorsed by the unit faculty curricular advisory body and the unit head when they come forward to the College.

At the College level, proposals for new programs, new courses, or course or program changes of significant scope and impact are reviewed by the Arts and Sciences Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning Committee (CTLC) and the associate dean for curriculum development (on behalf of the Dean). Course or program changes of modest scope and impact are reviewed by the associate dean for curriculum development.

All proposals, regardless of scope and impact, will have a rationale that reflects the principles articulated above. Program and course proposals of significant scope and impact will address the key points and include the key elements described below. The College is happy to work with proposers at any stage of the proposal development process.

New Program or Program Revamp

1. **Program Educational Goals.** Programs must have a clear set of educational goals, expressed in cogent terms for internal and external audiences. Craft a goal statement for the program that succinctly articulates the knowledge, disposition, capacities, and skills that students will develop in the program and addresses how they will demonstrate those learning outcomes. Clarify how the program's educational goals link with the College's encompassing mission of liberal arts education for the public good.

2. **Rationale, Current Demand, Growth Potential, Recruitment & Outreach Strategy.** What regional, national, global developments call for the program's establishment? What constituencies will the program serve? What is the case for growth? How will the program attract students who might not otherwise have considered BGSU?

➔*As part of this discussion, schedule a consultation with a curriculum a-dean and the College Student Recruitment and Outreach Coordinator.*

3. **Program Distinction.** How will the program distinguish itself from programs in similar fields at other institutions? How will the program both distinguish itself from and positively interact with programs currently offered at BGSU?

4. **Student Learning.** How will students grow intellectually in the program? What capacities will they increase? What skills will they develop? How will student growth be captured and made visible to the program, to current and prospective students, and to other constituencies?

   a) **Integrative Learning.** "Integrative learning is an understanding and a disposition that a student builds across the curriculum and co-curriculum, from making simple connections among ideas and experiences to synthesizing and transferring learning to new, complex situations within and beyond the campus" (Rhodes 2009). The goal of integrative learning is to raise students' metacognitive awareness of the *applicability* of academic learning and the *transferability* of knowledge, capacities, and skills across different areas. Programs can foster integrative learning by providing learning experiences that strengthen students' ability to see connections and draw analogies between
      * different academic disciplines
      * general and specialized studies
      * classroom and experiential learning
      * curriculum and co-curriculum
      * academic programs and communities within and beyond campus
      * academic life and civic life
      * academic settings and professional settings

      Students who achieve integrative learning are better prepared for transitions—from college to a range of possible careers, from undergraduate studies to advanced studies—and better equipped to face the complexity and uncertainty that the next stages of their lives will involve, regardless of their paths. Following the AAC&U Integrative Learning VALUE Rubric, a University task force has formulated the following goals for integrative learning. These should serve as a reference during development/revision of program learning outcomes.

      GOAL #1: CONNECTIONS TO EXPERIENCE
      Students are able to fully synthesize connections between life experiences and academic knowledge.

      GOAL #2: CONNECTIONS TO DISCIPLINE
      Students are able to synthesize examples, facts, and theories from multiple fields of study or perspectives.

GOAL #3: TRANSFER
Students are able to adapt and apply skills, abilities, theories, and methodologies gained in one situation to new situations.

GOAL #4: INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION
Students are able to connect form and content and to communicate using forms and formats that enhance meaning.

GOAL #5: REFLECTION AND SELF-ASSESSMENT
Student demonstrates a developing sense of self as a learner, that builds on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts.

Ideally, integrative learning across the undergraduate career culminates in *Signature Work,* which functions both as a capstone achievement and a document of a graduate's preparation for life beyond graduation. Signature Work could, for example, be an undergraduate research product, creative work, an internship, a community-based project, or a capstone project. In all its forms, it incorporates a robust reflective element that enables students to frame for themselves and for different audiences the value and impact of their undergraduate experience. The goals for integrative learning align with the following learning outcomes for Signature Work:

LEARNING OUTCOME # 1 *Make Connections to Experience*
Articulate a significant theme, topic, issue, or problem that relates relevant experiences to specialized knowledge of the major.

LEARNING OUTCOME # 2 *Make Connections to Discipline **and across Disciplines***
Research, assess, and synthesize knowledge from multiple sources, viewpoints, and/or disciplines individually or in collaboration with others.

LEARNING OUTCOME # 3 *Transfer and Integrate Learning to the Culminating Project*
Adapt and apply skills, abilities, knowledge, theories, or methodologies gained to complete an original final project, **which should engage an important contemporary issue**.

LEARNING OUTCOME # 4 *Engage in Integrated Contextual Communication*
Design and generate a significant oral, written, creative or applied piece/outcome which conveys the meaning of the final project.

LEARNING OUTCOME # 5 *Engage in Reflection and Self-Assessment*
Across the academic experience, from BGP through the culminating courses, apply learning to reflect on and critically examine learning to develop a plan for the future.

Consult within your unit and with the College on possibilities for building integrative learning and signature work into your program. Two links to more information about integrative learning and signature work are included below.

b) **Experiential Learning.** Each new program will feature an experiential learning component. There are multiple institutionally-defined options: internships, undergraduate research and creative work, study abroad, service-learning, and others. Consult within your unit and with the College on what option(s) will work best for your program.

c) **Evidence-Based Pedagogy.** How would you articulate the principles of learning that informs the teaching culture of the program, and how are those principles applied throughout the curriculum? What research or professional development—readings in the learning sciences, research on pedagogy in your discipline, best practices published by professional organizations, teaching conferences or workshops— informs the pedagogical approach? What evidence-based teaching practices will the program feature?

→ *A list of recommended readings in the learning sciences is included below. A good place to start is Ambrose, S. A., Bridges, M. W., DiPietro, M., Lovett, M. C., & Norman, M. K. (2010). How learning works: Seven research-based principles for smart teaching. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.*

5. **Program Learning Outcomes, Curricular Coherence, Structure.** Well-formulated outcomes will reflect the program's educational goals and distinguishing features and elegantly capture the knowledge, dispositions, capacities, and skills and that will define the program's graduates. Using the educational goal statement and the Integrative Learning goals as key references, formulate program learning outcomes that are meaningful for students and faculty and sufficiently precise to be measurable. Working backward from the educational goals and program learning outcomes, the program design should feature an integral, sequenced set of learning experiences that foster growth toward the outcomes. The following materials will work together to provide a textual and visual depiction:
   - A tabular curriculum map course grid, to provide an overview of the program courses, identify the program outcomes around which the courses are focused, and indicate the level of the learning experiences in each course:
     - *Benchmark* level (acquisition of foundational knowledge, identification and initial development of key dispositions, capacities, skills), typically associated with year one in a traditionally structured program.
     - *Milestone* levels (diversification/deepening of knowledge, further development/reinforcement of key dispositions, capacities, skills), typically associated with years two and three in a traditionally structured program.
     - *Capstone* level (completion-stage depth and breadth of knowledge, refinement of dispositions and capacities, mastery of skills), typically associated with final year or term in a traditionally structured program.

- A tabular learning experience curriculum map, to provide concise narrative descriptions of what progress toward each outcome looks like at the benchmark, milestone, and capstone levels, to indicate the type of curricular and co-curricular experiences that will foster that progress, and to identify examples of student work products that document progress.
- A sample 4-year plan that shows a practical path to completion within that timeframe.

  → *The College can provide advice and/or examples, including guidance on when to loop in the Office of Academic Assessment for targeted technical adjustment of outcomes formulations.*

6. **Resource Impact.** Proposals need to account for facilities/space, equipment, staffing, program promotion, other aspects as appropriate. Work with the College on a memo (and an accompanying spreadsheet, if called for) to address resource impact.

7. **Sustainability.** The reality that we inhabit requires us to argue persuasively that the program can be launched with the faculty and infrastructure that we currently have in place (or that has already been agreed to by unit, College, and Provost). Future allocation of additional resources and/or hires is contingent on enrollment growth. Framing this will require good consultation within the unit and between the unit and the College.

The key elements of a new program proposal are:

1. Proposal cover sheet ("blue sheet") and the accompanying Program Change Request Form. Proposed catalog copy and check sheet should accompany this program proposal.

   → *Ask the College for a document that cues where your responses to the prompts in the Arts and Sciences Curriculum Development Guidelines can be incorporated in the Program Change Request Form.*

2. Outcomes-based curriculum map (course grid and learning experiences), sample four-year plan.
3. Course proposal materials for new courses and/or courses that will change with the implementation of the program.
4. Any appropriate supporting documentation. Examples include a cover memo to address things that the Program Change Request Form does not directly prompt, resource impact memo and spreadsheet, correspondence that documents consultation and support for the course beyond the unit (other units on campus, community partners, profession-based groups, etc.).

New Courses

1. **Alignment: The Course and the Curriculum.** A course proposal is, in effect, a program proposal. How does the proposed course reflect the program educational goals and

advance the instructional mission of the unit? What need does it fill in the program or programs that it serves? How will it function within the program curriculum? What are the course outcomes? How do the course outcomes align with the program outcomes? (Is it time to revisit the program outcomes?)

Well-formulated outcomes will
- reflect the program's educational goals and pedagogical approach
- capture the knowledge, dispositions, capacities, and skills and that students will develop and/or refine in the course
- align with program outcomes
- be tailored to the course's curricular level
- be measurable

→ *The College can provide advice and/or examples.*

2. **Student Learning.** How will students grow intellectually in the course? What knowledge will they expand? What capacities will they expand? What skills will they develop? What research or professional development—readings in the learning sciences, research on pedagogy in your discipline, best practices published by professional organizations, teaching conferences or workshops—informs the pedagogical approach? What evidence-based teaching practices will the course feature? How would you articulate the principles of learning that inform those practices? Does the course incorporate experiential learning? How will student progress toward course outcomes be captured and made visible to the students and to the program?

   - A list of recommended readings in the learning sciences is included below. A good place to start is Ambrose, S. A., Bridges, M. W., DiPietro, M., Lovett, M. C., & Norman, M. K. (2010). How learning works: Seven research-based principles for smart teaching. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

3. **Demand.** Will the course serve all students within the home program or is it targeted toward a subset? What functionality could the course have beyond the home unit/program? Could it become part of an interdisciplinary program? Could it serve as an elective for other programs? Could it be eligible for the Arts and Sciences Multidisciplinary Component (MDC)? Or possibly for general education?

4. **Staffing and Offerings.** A new course needs a sustainable staffing/delivery model. Who will teach this course? When that person is not able to, who else will? If the course is important enough to be part of a program, then it should be delivered on a regular basis. *That calls for a staffing model that does not hinge on one colleague alone.* How frequently will the course be offered? If applicable: How will offerings of this course balance with offering of courses that serve similar curricular functions, such that similar courses do not compete with one another?

The key elements of a new course proposal are:

1. Course proposal cover sheet ("blue sheet") and the accompanying Course Change Request Form.
   o Ask the College for a document that cues where your responses to the prompts in the Arts and Sciences Curriculum Development Guidelines can be incorporated in the Course Change Request Form.
2. Sample syllabus.
3. Proposed updates to catalog copy and check sheet, accompanied by an EZ blue sheet.
4. Appropriate supporting documentation. Examples include a cover memo to address things that the Course Change Request Form does not directly prompt and/or correspondence that documents consultation and support beyond the unit.

Program and Course Proposals: Key Steps

1. Review the inventory: When putting a new course, a new program, or a major program change forward, review the course inventory. This is about curricular coherence and truth in advertising. If there are courses on the books that, de facto, no longer exist, they should be off the books. If there are courses on the books that have become obsolete, they should be revamped or eliminated.
2. Consult within the unit: Unit-level deliberation should be conducted in accordance with unit policies and practices. At minimum, proposals should carry the endorsement of the unit faculty curricular advisory body and the unit head when they come forward to the College.
3. Consult with students and alumni. Their perspectives will enrich and expand your vision provide important points of reference for thinking about metacognition and integrative learning.
4. Consult with other units: Other departments and/or schools will likely be affected in ways that they perceive as positive or negative. Consultation is important in both instances. The College can point out possible connections or implications that you may not be aware of, and we can provide advice on how to marshal support or work through the lack thereof.
5. Consult with the College: We defer to proposers' judgment on exactly when to open a channel to us, but it is wise to be in communication with us during drafting/development of proposals. Proposers can request a meeting, share draft proposals electronically for feedback, etc. We can provide guidance and/or act as sounding board on things like evidence-based teaching practices, outcomes formulation, curriculum mapping, making the case for demand and growth, communication with other units, etc. When we have effective consultation as proposals evolve, the process overall is more efficient, open, and meaningful.
6. Prepare for an iterative, multi-stage process: Course proposals go through a review and approval process in the College office and in the Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning Committee (CTLC). Program proposals go through those two stages as well as the following:
   • New majors or degrees: Undergraduate Council, Senate Committee on Academic Affairs, Senate Exec, Faculty Senate, Provost, Board of Trustees, the Ohio

Department of Higher Education (ODHE), and the Higher Learning Commission (HLC).
- New minors or specializations: Undergraduate Council, Senate Committee on Academic Affairs, Senate Exec, Faculty Senate, Provost.

7. Draft materials, email to College for feedback, finalize based on that feedback: Send us draft materials electronically—no need to submit hard copy drafts. Once revision is complete and we're in agreement that things are set, run final hard copies and send those forward.

Program and Course Proposals: FAQs

- Does the proposal require a full blue sheet (i.e., cover sheet plus Course or Program Change Request Form) or can we do an EZ blue sheet?
  - For a small change to a course number, title, or description or a small change to the program structure & check sheet, the EZ form is fine. If you're making multiple changes at once or a larger-scale change to a course or program, it will likely require a full blue sheet. Tip: Consult the College for guidance.
- How long does it take for things to get approved and implemented?
  - It depends on how many approval levels are required, how much revision may be requested at each stage, how packed the agendas of a given review body are, etc. To make the Fall catalog, a proposed course or program needs to reach the Office of Registration and Records after approval at all required stages and the final OK of the Provost by mid-February.
    - Rule of thumb for new courses: Get finalized proposals to the College a year in advance of the start of your target term for catalog activation.
    - Rule of thumb for new programs: Get finalized proposals to College two years in advance of the start of your target term for catalog activation.
- When cued to "consult the College," whom do I contact?
  - A-deans Ted Rippey and Phil Dickinson, Admin Asst Chris Bloomfield.

Readings in the Learning Sciences

Ambrose, S. A., Bridges, M. W., DiPietro, M., Lovett, M. C., & Norman, M. K. (2010). How learning works: Seven research-based principles for smart teaching. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

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Fink, L. D. (2013). Creating significant learning experiences: An integrated approach to designing college courses. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

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Pashler, H., Bain, P., Bottge, B., Graesser, A., Koedinger, K., McDaniel, M., & Metcalfe, J. (2007). Organizing instruction and study to improve student learning (NCER 2007-2004). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Research, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from http://ncer.ed.gov

Sawyer, R. K. (Ed.) (2006). The Cambridge handbook of the learning sciences. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Sawyer, R. K. (Ed.) (2014). The Cambridge handbook of the learning sciences (2nd edition). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Online resource: www.learningscientists.org

References for Integrative Learning

Rhodes, T. (2009). *Assessing outcomes and improving achievement: Tips and tools for using the rubrics*. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities.

Integrative Learning for Liberal Education (Mary Taylor Huber, Pat Hutchings and Richard Gale) www.aacu.org/publications-research/periodicals/integrative-learning-liberal-education

Mapping a Path from Curriculum to Career: The Lynk Initiative at Mount Holyoke College www.aacu.org/campus-model/mapping-path-curriculum-career-lynk-initiative-mount-holyoke-college