Recommendations for Effective Program and New Course Proposals

College of Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee

In the College of Arts and Sciences, curriculum proposals (new majors/minors/concentrations, revisions to existing majors and minors) must go through several stages and be reviewed by several bodies before they become part of the university curriculum. Maintenance changes such as deleting or renumbering courses will not need committee review. Once a proposed curriculum change is submitted to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences it is typically reviewed by College of Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee (CASCC), which consists of faculty members who represent the various disciplines housed in the college. After reviewing the curriculum proposal, the CASCC offers its recommendations to the Dean’s office. From the Dean’s office, the proposal goes through several more steps: Dean of Arts and Sciences >> AVP >> Academic Council Curriculum Committee >> Academic Council.

Since the CASCC was reconstituted in 2008 it has reviewed numerous proposals for new concentrations and minors as well as proposals for changes to existing majors and minors. During that time the committee’s members have found that the most effective proposals share certain common features: 1) they provide a general proposal or summary with a clear explanation of the proposed curriculum change; 2) they provide a rationale that clearly describes the need for the proposed curriculum change; 3) they offer a detailed description of the new or revised program of study; 4) they offer a thorough assessment of the instructional resources and support that are needed carry out the proposed curriculum change and how those concerns will be addressed; 6) they address any concerns about outcomes assessment.

In more detail:

1. A general proposal or summary will state the purpose of the new program or program change and it will describe how the program or program change will benefit students. What are the student learning goals?

2. What is the rationale for the new program or program change? Why is it needed? If it is a proposal for a new program, why should Gonzaga have it, and how does it fit with the university’s mission? Are schools with a profile similar to Gonzaga’s adopting similar programs? Will the proposed program somehow distinguish Gonzaga from schools with a similar profile? If it is a proposal for a change to an existing program (new track, new minor, revised major or minor), why is the change necessary? If it is a proposal to change the credits awarded for a course, specifically what is expected of the student and of the faculty member under the current number of credits, and what will be expected of the student and of the faculty member under the proposed number of credits? Explain the impact the credit change will have on the major, minor, classroom scheduling, and other departments.
3. It is helpful to provide a detailed program of study, listing all required courses (existing or new) and corresponding credits that will be necessary for successful completion of the program. It should be described in the way it would appear in the university catalogue. If the proposal is a change to an existing program, show how the revised program compares with the existing one. Will other programs be affected (for example, programs that have courses that are cross-listed with the program under consideration)? How will these changes affect the catalogue (for example, renumbered courses)?

4. What kinds of instructional resources and academic support will be needed to carry out the proposal? Do all the necessary resources and support exist? If it is a proposal for a new program, how will it be administered (and who will administer it)? Which faculty members will be affiliated with it?

5. What are the possible concerns about the proposed new program or program revision? Such concerns may include: a) how faculty members are affected; b) compensation issues; c) budgeting concerns

6. Does the proposal contain an assessment plan? How will student learning outcomes be assessed?

Departments and faculty members should additionally consult the Academic Council Checklist (see below) before submitting curriculum changes (new course, new programs, and changes in existing programs) to the College of Arts and Sciences for approval. This checklist contains helpful recommendations for 1) new courses and 2) new programs and changes in existing programs.

**Academic Council Checklist**

**New course proposal checklist:**

The following is a check-list to guide preparation of proposals for new undergraduate courses prepared for the Curriculum Committee of the Academic Council.

1.) ____ Has the standard “New Catalog Course Form” been correctly filled out? Are the numbers given for re-taking the course, maximum credits, prerequisites and/or co requisites based on the Registrar’s understanding of those terms?

2.) ____ Is a course description included? Is the course description and title clear and does it accurately reflect the content of the course?

3.) ____ Did you check to see if the course already exists under a different name within the department? If so, is the apparent duplication explained?
4.) Was there a check to see if the course content parallels an existing course elsewhere in the university? If so, has the course been vetted by that school or the college?

5.) Has the course been considered in light of the department/school/university objectives?

Overall Procedure:

• New Catalog Course Form is completed
• Signature of Chair is required
• Approval of the School/College Curriculum Committee
• Signature of the appropriate Dean
• Submitted to AVP’s office
• Review by the Academic Council Curriculum Committee
• Approval by Academic Council
New program or program revision proposal checklist:

The following is a check-list to guide preparation of proposals for new undergraduate programs prepared by the Curriculum Committee of the Academic Council.

1.) ___ Is the proposal thorough? Does it include: a program rationale, an analysis of demand for the program, an analysis of budgetary issues, an outline of curriculum, a statement of needed faculty, a statement addressing evaluation and assessment, and any other relevant issues? Are copies of “New Course Form” for all proposed new courses included?

In addition the following items are areas of concern for the committees and should be considered by the proposers.

2.) ___ Have the faculty, staff, and administration affected by the proposal been given an adequate opportunity to express their opinions concerning the proposal?

3.) ___ Have any reservations towards the proposal been expressed within the department or school, and, if so, have these reservations been made explicit? Has there been an adequate opportunity for those with reservations to express their views?

4.) ___ Has consideration been given to the impact on students affected by the proposed change?

5.) ___ Has there been adequate time allowed for the issues above to be explored? (Under normal circumstances allow 2 to 3 months from proposal to acceptance although at times it could take less or more time depending on circumstances.)

6.) ___ Has the Foley Library been contacted to determine if there are additional library resources that might be needed? Has the IT staff been contacted if there are additional technology resources needed?

7.) ___ Have possible effects on programs in other Departments/Schools been considered? If any, have these been addressed, or discussed with the chair/dean of the affected program?

8.) ___ If this change impacts graduation requirements for currently enrolled students do you have plans in place with the Registrar to deal with issues that may arise?

Interdisciplinary programs should also

1. Discuss cross listing and course designations with the Registrar’s Office

2. Explain role of any advisory groups or program director positions
Overall Procedure:

- Program documentation prepared and submitted
- Approval of the School/College Curriculum Committee
- Signature of the appropriate Dean
- Submitted to AVP’s office
- Concurrent Review by the Academic Council Curriculum Committee and the Academic Council Assessment Committee (review process may require a program sponsor be available to answer committee questions)
- Approval by Academic Council