Graduate Studies Committee
Standard Operating Procedures
Approved May 11, 2021

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Graduate Studies Committee

Committee Charge
This committee shall study policy areas and make recommendations to the Faculty Senate affecting graduate curricula and graduate academic standards and shall maintain a liaison with the Educational Policies Committee on curricular matters of mutual interest. In addition, the Committee appoints a GSC member to each Program Review, and in general, serves as an advocate for graduate programs.

Committee Membership
The committee shall consist of thirteen members; ten members elected by the Faculty Senate for a term of 3 years, two members appointed by the President for one year and one graduate student appointed by the Associated Students Senate for one year.

Standard Operating Procedures

Agendas
The Chair of the GSC and the Executive Secretary will finalize the agenda for Graduate Studies Committee meetings no later than one week before the regularly scheduled meetings. Similarly, action item materials are distributed no later than one week before each meeting. Materials not submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies one week prior to the upcoming meeting may not be distributed or used for action at that meeting and will be scheduled for the next month's GSC meeting.

Minutes
Minutes of each meeting will be approved at the next regularly scheduled Committee meeting with the exception of the last meeting in December and the last meeting in May. Minutes of those meetings will have tacit approval if no objections are received by the Executive Secretary one week from the distribution of the minutes. Minutes will be distributed to the Senate Executive Committee liaison by email and be posted on the GSC website in a timely manner.

Discussions and Deliberations
Robert's Rules of Order provide the format for the conduct of meetings. Committee members will be recognized prior to guests in all matters involving discussion. However, Committee members may pass their turn to any guest. Whenever possible, the Committee will hear all interested parties.

Voting
Motions before the GSC are adopted if they receive a majority of the votes cast. Members may vote "For" or "Against" a proposal or item. Members may also "Abstain" from voting. Abstentions do not count as a vote.

The Chair may vote on all motions. Any GSC member may request a show of hands vote or a roll call vote. Votes on Committee actions requiring a counted vote are to be recorded in the minutes.

Quorum
A majority of the voting committee shall constitute a quorum.

Committee Communication
GSC E-mail Communication: Members as well as others may wish to communicate through the use of email. These listserv email addresses are to be used only for GSC business

purposes.
   a) To send an email only to GSC Members, use: GSCOMM-L@csun.edu
   b) To send an email only to the Associate Deans, use: ASSOCIATE.DEANS-L@csun.edu

Curriculum Proposals

All graduate curriculum proposals should be forwarded to the Graduate Studies Committee.

Each semester GSC will review Curriculum proposals for permanent changes in programs and courses. This includes new programs, new courses, program and course modifications, Selected Topics, and Experimental Topics course proposals (formally called Special Topics).

400-Level Courses Available for Graduate Credit:
The review includes 400 level courses that departments wish to offer for graduate credit (i.e. Graduate/Undergraduate Class Level). New curriculum proposals for 400 level courses should state, "Available for graduate credit" in the course description and describe the difference in expectations for graduate students as compared to undergraduate students. Course modification proposals for 400 level courses will require a statement to describe the expectations for graduate students if the department is modifying the content. If graduate students will be graded differently, then departments should also write a statement within the assessment or SLO portion of the proposal describing any differences in grading between undergraduate and graduate students.

Selected Topics:
Departments must submit Selected Topics requests (using a New Course Proposal form) to GSC for review. Selected Topics Courses are offered in a timely manner, or represent a faculty member's special area of interest or expertise. These courses are not taught on a regular basis. The course numbers are in the 500 A-Z or 600 A-Z designations with each letter representing a different topic.

Experimental Topics:
Departments must submit new Experimental Topics Course requests (using the Experimental Course Proposal form) to GSC for review. These courses are numbered as 595A-Z or 695A-Z. Experimental Topics Course proposals are generally approved without significant discussion unless a Committee member expresses a concern. New Course Proposal forms are only required for the initial request, and subsequent requests for previously offered Experimental Topic Courses are handled via memo from the Associate Dean. The department will be required to submit a form rather than a memo if the course content/description has changed substantially. Please note that Experimental Topics Courses are limited and may be offered up to four times in six years. Beyond this limit, courses must be submitted to GSC for approval as a new course.

Learning Outcomes and Methods of Assessment in Curriculum Proposals:
GSC procedure is that the following types of curriculum proposals require complete responses to the Student Learning Objectives and Assessment Methods questions on the curriculum forms:
   • New Program Proposals
   • New Program Options
   • Major Program Modifications
   • New Course Proposals

- New Experimental Course Proposals
- Course Modifications when the Nature of Request is to Change Unit Value, Change Course Content, Change Course Type (Classification), Change Basis of Grading or Change Use of Course in Program.

Curriculum proposals that do not have complete responses to the Learning Outcomes and Methods of Assessment will not be reviewed further. Student Learning Objectives should address each of the University's Graduate Institutional Learning Outcome.

The goal of graduate education at California State University, Northridge, is to offer students advanced intellectual development and to prepare students for success in their careers. Upon completion of their programs, all graduate students will have:

1. Demonstrated a graduate-level mastery of the contemporary knowledge base of their field of study.
2. Mastered the discipline-based skills required for success in the field, and will be able to apply them to common problems within the field.
3. Displayed the personal attributes of dispositions required for success in the field, such as persistence, creativity, and good ethical judgment.

Student Learning Objectives or Assessment Methods documents are not required as long as the program has published program objectives and an assessment plan and the change does not affect the student learning objectives or the assessment plan. Examples include:

- Course Modifications when the Nature of the Request is to Delete a Course, Change Course Title, Change Current Catalog Description (without changing Course Content), Change Course Abbreviation or Course Number or Change Requisites.
- Minor Program Modifications (e.g., updating the program to reflect changes in course numbers, course titles, course requisites or minor changes in lists of electives.)

Circulation and GSC Review

Associate Deans will route all of their graduate curriculum to the Graduate Studies Committee in OnBase.

The calendar of deadlines for curriculum review will be posted on the GSC website.

The GSC will send revisions, recommendations and queries to the Associate Deans using the Curricular Review Notes sheet at least three weeks prior to the GSC meeting. Associate Deans must revise proposals at least one week prior to the GSC meeting. In addition, the Curricular Review Notes sheet will be returned to the lead reviewers on GSC at least one week prior to the GSC meeting. If curriculum is not revised one week prior, it will not be considered until the next GSC meeting.

GSC deadlines for curriculum proposals must coordinate with the deadlines of Admissions and Records, the Schedule of Classes and the publication of the University Catalog.

The titles of all approved curriculum proposals appear in the GSC minutes. GSC minutes are submitted for review to the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate and posted on the GSC website.

GSC Curriculum Review Cycle

Curriculum will be reviewed twice each academic year. The GSC Curriculum Review Cycle is based upon a one-year implementation cycle. Curriculum approved in the fall semester will be normally implemented no earlier than the following fall semester. Curriculum approved in the spring semester will be normally implemented no earlier than the following spring semester. At the discretion of the Graduate Studies Committee, curriculum may be considered for approval in the following semester only in unusual circumstances, such as state-mandated changes in curriculum for credential programs.

For GSC consideration, proposals must:
1. Be submitted by established deadlines;
2. Be complete (including required cover sheets, curriculum forms, and records of necessary consultation and attachments);
3. Be written in clear and concise terms.

GSC Curriculum Review Procedures

All curriculum proposals should receive close scrutiny at the Department and College levels to ensure that they are academically sound and comply with the guidelines in this document and on the relevant curriculum form. Curriculum proposals shall not be forwarded to GSC until approved by the appropriate College-level Committee(s) and forwarded by the Associate Dean of the College.

Proposals will be reviewed by members of the GSC for the following:
1. Completeness: The proposal must be complete: all requested information must be on the proposal. Curriculum proposals that are incomplete or that are deemed not to be ready for consideration by the Chair of GSC in consultation with the Executive Secretary will not be placed on the agenda.
2. Overlap: There should be no substantial overlap of course content with extant courses across the university. Where overlap does exist, clear records of consultation and agreement between the departments and/or programs will be discussed.
3. Resources: Proposals should clearly articulate all the resource implications (from facilities and equipment to faculty and staff) for the proposed course or program. (See Appendix A)
4. Consultation: Proposals should have a completed record of consultation that clearly indicates concurrence from all appropriate departments and/or programs. (See Appendix B)
5. Assessment: Proposals should include Student Learning Outcomes that are aligned with the Graduate Institutional Learning Outcomes and appropriate methods of Assessment.

Concerns and questions pertaining to curriculum proposals are documented on the Review of Curriculum forms and routed back by the GSC reviewers to the appropriate Associate Dean three weeks prior to the next GSC meeting in which the proposal is to be discussed. After corrections are made to proposals, revised copies will be submitted back to GSC at least one week prior to the next GSC meeting.

Additional Information for Reviewers:
- It is the responsibility of every committee member to review all curriculum proposals presented to the committee.
- Consent calendar: some curriculum proposals will be moved onto a consent calendar.

The purpose of the consent calendar will be to expedite proposals that are deemed to be non-controversial. The Chair of GSC will move items onto the consent calendar in consultation with the Executive Secretary of the Committee. All of these items will remain available for review by all GSC members and any GSC member may remove an item from the consent calendar at any time prior to or during the meeting at which the item is to be considered. Items on the consent calendar will be acted upon as a single item (i.e., all items on the consent calendar shall be voted upon with a single vote).

- Learning outcomes and methods of assessment: curriculum proposals should outline both how assessment activities have contributed to the proposals and how the curriculum proposal will fit into the program. This information may be provided in narrative form. Matrices must be included for proposals as discussed above.

Appendices

Appendix A: Revenue and Resource Implications for Curricular Change

Departments may wish to consider the following items when assessing curriculum changes. This list is not exhaustive, nor is it a required checklist. This is simply a guide to considering the resource implications of the curriculum proposal.

Revenue Model
- Will this program be offered for the usual state tuition? If so, will that be adequate to support the program?
- Will this program charge the professional fee? If so, how will the additional revenue be used?
- Will this program be done through EXL? If so, what tuition and fees will be charged? What is the revenue forecast?
- Will the program be delivered to cohorts of students? If so, what is the anticipated cohort size? If the program is self-support, what is the break-even point for a cohort?

Facilities Changes/Additions
- Will new space be needed?
- Will changes to existing facilities be required?
- What is cost of any facility additions or changes?
- Are there other on-going costs to consider?

Low Enrollment
- What are the enrollment goals for this program?
- How long will it take to achieve the enrollment goals?
- What is the cost of sustaining the program during an initial low enrollment period?

Administrative/ Support Staff
- Will this change require new or different administrative or technical support?
- If so, what are the costs?

Faculty Costs
- Does the Department or Program have sufficient full-time faculty to lead the program?
- Does the program require part-time faculty? If so, is there an existing pool of part-time faculty to supplement the full-time faculty, or will the program require hiring new part-time faculty?
- If so, what is the estimated cost?

University Library Collections and Services
- What are the estimated costs to build and maintain a collection to support the program?
- What support is needed from librarians in terms of services?

Appendix B: Guidelines for Curricular Consultation

The general purposes of consultation are to ensure that other departments and colleges around campus are aware of new and changed curriculum, to identify areas of overlap, to identify implications of curricular changes for other departments and colleges, and to simply make other units aware of new or changed offerings in areas that may be of interest.

When Consultation Should Occur
Any department or program authoring curriculum proposals (new courses, course modifications, new programs, and program modifications) should consult with other departments and colleges that may be interested and impacted in the curricular change. The bullet points below offer a range of reasons why another department or college should be consulted. If any of these apply, consultation is required:

- Proposing a curricular change that utilizes another department's course or that affects enrollment in another department's course. Many majors include other department's courses in their required or elective offerings. If a program is adding or deleting one of those courses from their electives, for instance, consultation with that outside program is required.
- Overlap. It is common for course offerings to have some overlap with other department's course offerings. If there is overlap either with particular courses or with the general disciplinary area of another department, consultation is required.

How Consultation Should Occur
Consultation should always be conducted between department chairs (or, if it is not a department, program coordinators) or between associate deans. When a department proposing a curricular change seeks consultation, the chair of that department should send the proposal (via email) to all department chairs for which consultation is required. Consultation should occur as early as possible but at least by the time the proposal is finalized by the department proposing it. In general, chairs should give other chairs at least two weeks to respond to a request for consultation. If there is no response, additional outreach should be done. If a department fails to respond entirely, the consult should be changed to No Response and GSC will treat this as concurrence.

Consultation Is Not a Veto
The response to a request for consultation should be listed officially as "Yes" if they concur, or "No" if they do not concur, or "In-Progress" if the consultation is still in progress. While that is the response listed on the form, the purpose of consultation is to identify opportunities and problems, to open up dialogue where there are problems or conflicts or problematic resource implications, and to seek to resolve any issues that arise before the proposal comes to GSC. If a department or college ultimately declines to concur on a proposal, the non-concurrence is not a veto of the proposal. GSC will be interested to understand the issues that came up and what the remaining objections are and will take that into account in making a decision on a proposal.

Resource Links

[Executive Order 1071 - Delegation of Authority to Approve Options, Concentrations, Special Emphases and Minors](#)
[Executive Order 1099 - Extended Education: Self-Supporting Instructional Courses and Programs](#)
[WASC - Standards of Accreditation](#)
[WASC - Degree Programs: Meaning, Quality, and Integrity of Degrees](#)
[Graduate Institutional Learning Outcomes Policy](#) The goal of graduate education at California State University, Northridge, is to offer students advanced intellectual development and to prepare students for success in their careers. Upon completion of their programs, all graduate students will have: 1. Demonstrated a graduate-level mastery of the contemporary knowledge base of their field of study. 2. Mastered the discipline-based skills required for success in the field, and will be able to apply them to common problems within the field. 3. Displayed the personal attributes of dispositions required for success in the field, such as persistence, creativity, and good ethical judgment.
[Course Alignment Matrix and Course Objectives Chart](#)