From: One OHIO Course and Program Approval Process Redesign Work Group (Contacts: Kristi Barnes and Sara Helfrich)

Subject: Final Committee Report

Date: April 28, 2020

The purpose of this document is to provide a final report from One OHIO Course and Program Approval Process Redesign Work Group.

Committee Membership

Co-Chairs: Kristi Barnes and Sara Helfrich

Members: Robert Galbreath, Tobe Gillogly, Pramod Kanwar, Greg Kremer, Hans Kruse, Jody Lamb, Kim Lang, Candice Morris, Mark Nevin, Connie Patterson, Beth Quitslund, Loralyn Taylor, Jacqueline Tudor, Nicole Williamson

Background

This group was convened in Summer 2019 with the charge of identifying and streamlining the critical functions of the University Curriculum Council [UCC]. Additionally, we were charged with making recommendations for ways in which the work of UCC could be improved upon in the future. To complete this work, the committee met during the Summer 2019 semester and determined the following steps were necessary:

1. Identify and compare the curricular approval processes in place at other four-year institutions with those in place at OHIO; and
2. Collect feedback from faculty, staff, and/or administrators involved in the UCC process from across OHIO.

The committee worked during Summer and Fall 2019 to complete this work. The data that was collected enabled us to identify areas for improvement within OHIO’s current UCC processes and make recommendations for changes that are a) immediately feasible and b) long-term goals.

Findings

Comparison of the curricular approval processes outside of OHIO

A review of universities across Ohio (i.e. Cleveland State University, Columbus State University, Kent State, Miami University, Ohio State, University of Akron, University of Toledo) and outside of Ohio (University of Maryland, University of Michigan) showed that the processes in place at OHIO are typical of those at other four-year public institutions. Specifically, the time it takes for courses and programs to move through the approval system, from creation to final approval, as well as the involvement of faculty, from creation to internal university approval (faculty-driven process) were similar.

This analysis yielded some items for consideration for adoption by UCC, including:

- chart/graphic illustrating the workflow processes; continuing of review process over the summer; master list of approved courses/programs available for public viewing.
Feedback from faculty, staff, and/or administrators
We solicited feedback from College Curriculum Committee [CCC] chairs or their designees, the Dean of the College of Fine Arts, and members of the Office of Information Technology [OIT].

Consensus from CCC chairs was that the process is overwhelming for faculty. This is due to several reasons. Faculty do not use OCEAN 1.9 and 2.0 regularly, so they are not familiar with the systems and the requirements of each. Guidelines for submission of materials are unclear or hard to find, or faculty do not read the guidelines before beginning their work. Faculty do not have time to devote to this type of work, so work may get started but not revisited for some time. Issues also exist at the systems and review levels. The systems (OCEAN 1.9 and 2.0) are not reliable (e.g., users experience glitches during use that causes issues at different review levels) or connected (e.g. OCEAN 1.9 and 2.0 do not share information with one another). The review times and processes vary by Department and College/School; some units meet regularly and have a streamlined process while others have several steps that add significant time to the process. There are review and approval steps beyond UCC (i.e., Board of Trustees, the state, Higher Learning Commission) that some programs are required to go through; it is not always clear which steps, if any, apply to a given program.

Dean Shaftel from the College of Fine Arts was consulted because of his significant past experience with the curricular approval processes at a former institution. He shared his experiences, which we considered in regards to our recommendations.

We met with Pete Lawrence from OIT. He collected information from members of the work group and others involved in some way in the UCC process. This included those responsible for working on OCEAN 1.9 and 2.0. Pete also attended a UCC meeting to observe the group’s work. This provided Pete with a clearer context for exploring alternatives to OHIO’s systems. Demos were scheduled for the co-chairs of the work group and others involved in this work, including members of the Registrar’s Office and Institutional Research. Additionally, options for improving OCEAN 1.9 and 2.0 were explored.

Recommendations

Based on the data we collected, we are able to make several recommendations for changes that will improve the curricular approval process.

The following actions have been taken to streamline the UCC process:

✓ Updated the Individual Course Committee [ICC] Guidelines (update as needed)
✓ Updated the Programs Guidelines, including new program/program change forms, and added flowcharts to clarify the review levels a program may need to go through outside of the University (e.g., State, Higher Learning Commission) (update as needed)
✓ Reorganized the UCC website for clarity and to allow for ease of access to important materials (update as needed)
✓ Created and posted to the UCC website a flowchart outlining the general course and program approval processes (update as needed)
✓ Created and posted to the UCC website a spreadsheet of all approved courses, programs, program reviews, and general education policies and forms (update as needed)
✓ Expedited the approval process for program changes (one reading with potential for approval; 4-week process vs. previous two reading, 8-week process)
✓ Expedited the approval process for new programs (one reading with potential for two-week comment period and approval; 6-week process vs. previous two reading, 8-week process)

The following recommendations are being made in regards to improving the course and program approval process over time as they will require considerable resources (multiple individuals/groups involved; time; financial support):
✓ Each College should identify at least one OCEAN 2.0 “Super-user” who is designated to give pre-submission advice to faculty working on course changes or new courses
  o Note: Due to the structure of their units, faculty from the Center for International Studies, Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs, and Honors Tutorial College should either be connected with another College’s “Super-user” or directly with the Chair/Co-Chairs of ICC
✓ Pursue options to either drastically improve OCEAN 1.9 and 2.0 or purchase systems to replace them (see report prepared by Pete Lawrence)
✓ Provide funding to individuals involved in CCCs and UCC to maintain the course and program approval process year-round (summer funding)