

Guidelines for Approving New Degree and Credential Programs at HSU

Introduction

The Academic Master Planning (AMP) subcommittee of the Integrated Curriculum Committee (ICC) is working to establish curricular guidelines for degree programs (Majors, Credentials, and Master's degrees). When proposing new degree programs, faculty should document how their program meets the standards, or provide a rationale for an exception.

Background

The AMP subcommittee's initial charge included developing criteria for approving new degree programs, with the goal of making the process more transparent and efficient. These guidelines will apply to all new degree programs, both those funded by the state and those funded through self-support.

Process

Initial planning for a new degree-program should begin with extensive informal conversations with all interested parties including the departmental faculty, Dean(s), and College Council(s) of Chairs. Departments are welcome, but not required, to consult the AMP as well at this stage. When all interested parties agree that the basic idea of the new program is acceptable, then the program begins the formal approval process. Formal approval of a new degree program is a three-step process.

The first step includes a letter of intent that describes the purpose and characteristics of the degree, the connection between the degree and the campus mission and the campus and societal need for the degree. ICC approval of the letter of intent will result in a request to the Chancellor's Office (CO) to add the program to HSU's Academic Master Plan. The ICC's response to the initial proposal will be transmitted to the Senate as an information item.

The second step of the process requires completing a draft of the CO's paperwork for New Programs. In this step, the proposed curriculum, student learning outcomes, and resource implications of the program will be examined in detail. In addition, all proposals will be evaluated by an outside reviewer (a CO requirement). Typically, proposals go through several revisions at this point as the AMP subcommittee and the program collaborate to develop plans for a program that will succeed at HSU. Completion of the second step will be reported to the full ICC as an information item.

In the third step of the process, the program submits the final version of the CO forms and all related curriculum change forms (new course forms, course change forms, etc.). While a few minor changes may still occur to the CO forms at this point, the majority of the work in Step Three will involve getting the details of the courses correct. When Step Three is complete, the complete package of proposals will go to the full-ICC and then the University Senate and the Provost's office for approval before being sent to the CO for final approval.

Step One: Letter of Intent

Process

The letter of intent will include all the information needed for the CO's "New Degree Projections on the Academic Master Plan." The letter of intent should be brief (no more than 2-3 pages), and provide a very general picture of what the new program would be as well as reasons that HSU should be offering this new program.

The AMP subcommittee will consider the letter of intent before sending it to the full ICC for possible approval. When ICC approval has been granted, the campus will submit the program to the CO for addition to HSU's Academic Master Plan. Once the program is added to the Academic Master Plan, the campus has permission to begin full-scale planning for the new degree.

Standards for Step One

The ICC will consider the factors listed below:

1. The degree supports the University Vision/Mission/Core Values and HSU Student Learning Outcomes.
2. The degree is grounded in a recognized scholarly discipline.
3. The degree serves a recognized student, or societal need.

Step Two: The Chancellor's Office Academic Program Proposal

Process

The program submits a draft of the CO "Academic Program Proposal" form to the ICC as well as to at least one off-campus reviewer who can comment on the proposed curriculum. The proposal will include the full curriculum, student learning outcomes mapped onto the curriculum, evidence of student demand for the program, projected student enrollments, and projected costs including new faculty hires.

Standards for Step Two

The AMP subcommittee will consider the factors listed below:

I. COHERENT CURRICULUM

1. The degree program has a stated curricular focus, a set of related student learning outcomes, and an explanation of how the curriculum supports those learning outcomes.
2. The set of courses required in the degree program is justified with respect to the development of student learning; each course in the degree is mapped to student learning outcomes.

3. All undergraduate major proposals are expected to demonstrate that students can complete the major and all General Education/All-University requirements in no more than 120 units. (With the exception of combined BA/Credential programs, the Chancellor's office generally will not approve programs of more than 120 units.) In addition, the program will create 4-year student course plans (MAP) to demonstrate that students can complete all the degree requirements in that time. Similar 2-year plans will be developed for transfer students showing how students who have completed Star Act AA degrees can effectively transition from community college programs to completing their degree in two more years.
4. To ensure that students easily understand the degree requirements, the Major curriculum will include all required courses (no hidden pre-requisites, no pre-major courses).
5. New degree programs will not duplicate existing offerings at HSU. Where appropriate, the proposal will address ways that this degree is similar or different from existing programs at HSU.
6. The program will provide comparisons of the proposed degree curriculum to that of similar programs at comparable institutions in order to demonstrate how much this program reflects trends in the discipline.

II. RESOURCES AND VIABILITY

1. The proposal will discuss resources needed for the new program. A five-year course rotation plan will show what courses will need to be offered for the program. Based on this plan, the proposal will include a calculation of the number of FTEF needed to teach the curriculum, and the number of majors needed for classes to have sufficient enrollment. In addition, the proposal will identify significant needs including new faculty, facilities, equipment, staff, library resources, advising needs, etc.
2. If the new program will need Accreditation, the proposal will discuss the implications of this including costs and standards for accreditation such as SFR, curriculum, or educational background of faculty.
3. The program will create four-year degree plans showing how prepared students can complete the degree in four years. The degree plan must be coordinated with the department's course-rotation plan.
4. The proposal will provide evidence of student interest and demand for this new degree program. Some of the evidence will include comparisons with similar degree programs at comparable institutions, and/or predictions of future employment trends. At minimum, the program will provide information about the number of majors in the comparable degree programs and the annual number of graduates. Where appropriate, the evidence for student interest should also include information about enrollment trends in the discipline.
5. The proposal will include a cost/efficiency statement completed by the relevant Dean's office(s).

Step Three: The Complete Final Proposal

Process

The final proposal will include:

1. Completed CO Paperwork
2. Completed curriculum proposals including new course proposals, syllabi and catalog copy.

Once the final proposal is in order, it will be submitted for approval to the full ICC, then the University Senate, then the Provost's office, and finally the CO.

The Senate resolution recommending approval of the program will include information about the expected start-up date for the program as well as a statement that the program and the Provost will negotiate appropriate benchmarks for the program.

Programs that are approved using the CO's Pilot Program process may operate at HSU for three years before the program must submit a revised version of the CO proposal for ICC and Senate approval.

Standards

1. Curriculum proposals are complete.
2. Syllabi conform to the HSU syllabus policy.
3. Course C-classifications are appropriate for the proposed mode of instruction, and expected student workload conforms to the *CSU Definition of Credit Hour (AA-2011-14)*
4. Course numbering conforms to HSU policies and practices for course numbering.
5. All remaining details are corrected in the Chancellor's Office form.

Definitions:

Program – programs are new Majors or new Graduate degrees. New options within existing programs are not new programs, and thus not covered by these guidelines.

Degree Plan – a plan showing how a student can complete a degree in four years. The Degree Plan includes major courses as well General Education and All-University (GEAR) requirements and space for elective units.

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Provost Snyder: Approved 05/02/12