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To: Academic Councils
From: Jessica Smith, Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs
Date: August 2, 2023
Re: Revision of approval charts for curriculum change

ACU's campus expansion in the last decade has created the need for communication among faculty who are in different programs and campuses that we hadn't needed previously. However, our curriculum approval processes largely still reflected a single-campus approach, and the formal restructuring of Academic Affairs on June 1 created an additional reason to look at the system. The proposed update comes from feedback from the chairs of the four terminal academic councils (Abilene Graduate Council, Abilene Undergraduate Academic Council, CGPS Academic Council, and University General Education Council) and the Office of the Registrar about usage patterns.

In summary, the proposed update to the campus-specific Approval Charts for Curriculum Change includes:

1. The deletion of the **Course Fee** item. Changing a course fee has a unique form, and its routing did not include any of the academic councils. Including it on the approval charts duplicated the process needed for Academic Affairs and Finance to enact these fees.
2. The addition of a **Course Restriction** item. Faculty choose to limit some courses to certain groups of students (majors only, junior standing required, etc.). Our current options created confusion about whether to add that as course description or prerequisite. Adding a separate item makes this clear for faculty and allows the Registrar's Office to track the requirements and history of a course when faculty ask.
3. Combining the **Close a Course** and **New Course** items. Open/close (or Add/Discontinue) items were already part of the charts in other places.
4. The reorganization of changes into sets that can be approved at the campus level and others that engage the university system. **Campus-level changes** involve revisions of existing curriculum or adding new courses, which primarily affect discipline-specific groups of students. In these cases, the campus academic council and chief academic officer of the campus are the final review steps. On the Abilene campus, this is the Provost. On the Dallas campus, this will remain the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs until the campus completes its consideration of its academic structure. **System-level changes** involve changes that affect all students on a campus, all students on all campuses, or opening or closing a program on a single campus. These changes affect more students, faculty, and staff and require coordination about university resources and implementation. Many of these changes already require a faculty vote, and that will continue. Final administrative approvals include the campus's chief academic officer, the Senior VPAA, and the President. The Board of Trustees, which was previously noted as an information item on some of these types of changes, will continue to be notified about new programs through the Academic Quality and Innovation Committee of the board as has been our practice.

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5. The final change is to the **routing of any item that involves a cross-listed course**. The department or program that originates a course is the one with purview to change it. There are two primary types of cross-listed courses at ACU. In the first, a course in one discipline may serve a second (e.g., an ethics course may have both BIBT and SOCI subject codes). In the second, a single course may serve multiple campuses (e.g., the institution needs only one introductory English course, so ENGL and ENGO 111 are the same course with different subject codes to show on which campus they are offered).

Up to this point, my previous role had been charged with chairing two of the councils and coordinating with the chairs of the other two. I could catch course changes and ask on an ad hoc basis for Abilene faculty to discuss the proposal with Dallas faculty so that Dallas faculty could initiate the corresponding update to the Dallas version of the course. As we become a larger and more complex institution, systems will serve us better in ensuring communication. All cross-listings are shown in catalog course descriptions, so faculty will send proposals to the person who oversees the program of the cross-listed course before it advances to the college or dean. Abilene faculty can ask Terry Baggs, and Dallas faculty can ask Scott Self if they need help identifying the responsible faculty for the other department/program or campus.

This does not change the purview of the faculty of the department/program of record to make changes. It does not share the responsibility with the other unit. It does not create the change in the cross-listed course; that faculty member will still need to initiate that change for their own course through their own approval structure. The signature ensures that we're discussing changes and being good partners with colleagues who are serving different groups of students.

ACU made the shift to a system approach in Academic Affairs to better support the maintenance and growth of the institution while formalizing representation for each campus's faculty and students. We have already been doing the work and communication of a university system, but now we have the opportunity to update our processes to reflect our reality in a sustainable fashion.