Curricular Review of Academic Departments and Programs
The College of Wooster

2012-2013

Curricular review and revision are necessary dimensions of the development of the academic program at The College of Wooster. The College promotes this goal by requiring that each department and program participate in a curriculum review once in each ten-year cycle. This document describes the process and the procedures for these reviews and the ways in which the Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement and the Educational Policy Committee assist departments and programs in these reviews.

The review process is essentially a *self-study* and an *assessment* in which departments identify learning goals for their students and their success in achieving them. Specifically, it examines the structure of a department's/program's curriculum, as this is reflected in its course offerings and requirements and as it is supported by its staff, facilities, and other resources. It asks that departments/programs consider the relationship between the responsibilities that they have to their majors, to the liberal arts core curriculum, and to the College's overall mission. The review process includes an outward dimension and comparative element, in that it requires that departments/programs appreciate the perspective that comes from external consultants, the study of departments/programs at other institutions, and national trends in the discipline. Finally, the review requires each department/program to consider its mission in relation to the institutional mission and the contribution it makes in this regard.

As the College undertakes a new cycle of ten-year reviews in 2003-2013, it can appreciate the results of previous cycles of review, which have in many cases resulted in significant change and development. The Educational Policy Committee assists at all stages of the review process, from the beginning, in which it offers each department/program its own perspectives on their program, to the conclusion, in which it acts upon proposals for curriculum revision and takes these to the faculty for approval.

A successful program review is one that includes direct and indirect evidence of outcomes-based assessment of student learning, in which outcomes are directly tied to the program's mission and goals. Direct evidence involves methods of collecting information that require students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills, and indirect evidence involves gathering information in which students, alumni, or others have been asked to reflect on student learning. Thus, departments and programs should incorporate assessment reports with the resulting data as evidence of student learning, and to provide examples of how these data have been used to inform program decision-making regarding improvements in student learning, teaching, or the department/program curriculum.

<u>Key Features of the Review</u>

- Planning Document
  - --- Following initial discussions with members of the department/program, the Chair will complete the planning document.

- The Self-Study Document
  --- After significant discussion among members of the department/program, a self-study document will be developed based on the outline provided in Appendix 3.

- Consultants' Visit
  --- This normally takes the form of a two-day visit to Wooster by a team of colleagues from other institutions.
  or
  --- It may consist of a visit by several members of Wooster's department or program to other institutions.

- Meeting with EPC
  --- A concluding meeting with the Educational Policy Committee to discuss the report and the department/program's curricular plans.

- Concluding Summary of Action Items
  --- This brief document will identify the pertinent issues coming out of the review and actions planned.

- Progress Report
  --- This brief document will provide a report of progress on the action items identified by the department and provide evidence of closing the feedback loop.

Timetable for the Review

DUE DATE	ACTION/ITEM	
Spring/summer no later than August 30	Meeting of chair with the Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement	
September	Consultation with Director of Educational Assessment	
September - December	Conversations among members of the Department	
October 15	Planning Document to EPC & consultant CVs	Appendix 2 & 4
October 15 – November 15	Initial meeting with EPC	
December 15	Alumni & Majors Survey Completed	Appendix 4
January 15	Consultants receive materials (30 days prior to visit)	Appendix 5
January 15	Itinerary for Consultants' Visit to DCAE	
January 15	Self-study to EPC (15 days prior to consultants' visit)	Appendix 3
February 28	Consultants' visit must be completed	

April 1	Consultants' report submitted to DCAE	
April 15-30	Concluding meeting with EPC	
May 15-June 1	Summary of Action Items to the DCAE	Appendix 1
May 15-June 1 (of the subsequent year)	Progress Report on Action Items	Appendix 1

Note: This timetable assumes a Spring Semester Consultants' Visit. It can be modified should a department or program choose to bring the consultants in the Fall.

Appendix 1

CURRICULAR REVIEW CHECKLIST

Department/Program_____

Chair During Review _____

1. Initial meeting with EPC _____Date

2. Curricular Review Planning Document _____Date

3. List of possible consultants sent to DCAE _____Date

4. Self-Study Report _____Date

5. Surveys _____Alumni _____Current Majors

6. Materials sent to consultants and copy to DCAE _____Date

7. Consultants brought to Wooster

   1._____ _____
   Name Institution

   2._____ _____
   Name Institution

OR

Campus Visit to _____

Members of the Department/Program _____

_____

8. Consultant's Report or Campus Visitation Report _____Date

9. Concluding meeting with EPC _____Date

10. Department's/Program's Concluding Summary of Action Items _____Date

11. Progress Report on Action Items _____Date (subsequent year)

_____

Appendix 2

PLANNING DOCUMENT FOR CURRICULAR REVIEW

Department/program members should hold discussion on

1. What is the mission statement of your department/program and how does it relate to that of the College?

2. What are the student learning goals of your department/program and how do they align with the College's graduate qualities?

3. How do you plan to assess whether or not your educational goals are being realized?

4. What are the most important issues you expect to consider during the review?

Appendix 3

OUTLINE FOR THE SELF–STUDY DOCUMENT

This section provides the outline for the Self-Study. These questions are not intended to be comprehensive. Given the uniqueness of each program, the Committee invites you to designate questions of your own as well. Please consider questions as appropriate, in relation to the major, the minor, and the general education requirements in which the department/program participates. Summarize the discussions of the most important issues you are focusing on and refer back to your planning document and make those connections.

Department Mission and Curricular Goals:

- Explain the mission statement and student learning goals of your department/program and the rationale for these.

  You may want to consider additional areas such as:
  - How do your learning goals relate to the department's mission?
  - How do your learning goals align with the College's graduate qualities?
  - How do your goals reflect changes in your discipline?

College Mission and Graduate Qualities:

- Discuss how your program's mission and learning goals fit with the institutional mission, college-wide curriculum, and graduate qualities, fits with other programs that support your majors and the college-wide curriculum.

  You may want to consider some of the following:
  - How does your department/program contribute to First-Year Seminar, writing-intensive courses, and other interdepartmental programs?

- What opportunities does your department/program offer to non-majors to satisfy general education requirements?
- Does your department/program receive and provide sufficient support to other majors?

The Structure of the Curriculum:

♦ Describe the relationship in content and approach of your courses, the disciplinary rationale for the current curricular structure, and the objectives of Independent Study in the major.

You may want to consider additional areas such as:

- How are theory and methodology of the discipline introduced?
- How does the structure prepare students for independent study?
- How are students introduced to the use of information literacy and technology in the discipline?

Students in Your Program:

♦ Describe the intellectual community that your department/program creates for its students.

For example:

- How are students advised in your department/program?
- How does advising address student goals and expectations?
- How does your department/program challenge your students?
- How does your department/program meet the needs of less well-prepared students?
- How are majors introduced to national or regional disciplinary organizations?

Resources to Achieve your Goals:

♦ Evaluate the physical and human resources available to support your goals and how well they are being utilized.

For example:

- Is your use of resources optimal?
- Do you have sufficient access to technology, equipment, physical space, etc.?
- Do you have sufficient professional and support staff?
- Are there sufficient library resources for your department/program?

Assessment and Feedback Mechanisms:

♦ Explain the methods of assessing student academic outcomes, the results of the department's/program's analysis, and the changes that the department/program has instituted as a result of your analysis.

Appendix 4

SURVEY OF ALUMNI AND MAJORS

Departments/programs may request lists of alumni and address labels from Alumni Records. The cost of postage and printing for the survey may be charged against the curricular review account. The Alumni office would like a copy of the letter sent to alumni to be forwarded to them for information.

For the purpose of measuring the College's Graduate Qualities, departments/programs must include the following questions from HEDS in this survey of alumni and majors. In order for us to use this data effectively, the questions and response choices must be worded exactly as provided from HEDS.

(1) About how many hours each week do you engage in volunteer work or community services for organizations

___none ___1-5 hours ___6-10 hours ___11-15 hours ___16 or more

(2) To what extent did your experience as an undergraduate contribute to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?

	Very little	Somewhat	Sufficiently	Considerably
Careful reading: Comprehension and analysis of written texts within across genres				
Critical thinking: Examination of ideas, evidence, and assumptions before accepting or formulating a conclusion				
Creative thinking: Developing or combining ideas, images, or expertise in innovative ways				
Information literacy: Locating, evaluating, and using information effectively and responsibly for a particular purpose				
Effective writing: Conveying accurate and compelling content in clear, expressive, and audience-appropriate prose				
Effective speaking: Conveying accurate and compelling content in clear, expressive, and audience-				

appropriate oral presentations				
Teamwork: Contributing to a team, facilitating the work of team members, and fostering constructive team climate				
Problem solving: Designing, evaluating and implementing a strategy to answer questions or achieve a goal				
Civic engagement: Promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes				
Intercultural knowledge and competence: Information, skills, and commitments that support effective and appropriate interactions n a variety of cultural contexts				
Ethical reasoning: Recognizing ethical issues, examining different ethical perspectives, and considering the ramifications of alternative actions				
Integrative thinking: The habit of connecting ideas and experiences, and the ability to transfer learning to novel situations				
Global Engagement and Respect for Diversity: Promoting self-reflective awareness of your role as a citizen in a diverse local, national, and global community				

(3) Overall, to what extent did your undergraduate experience prepare you for the following activities?

	Very little	Somewhat	Sufficiently	Considerably
Graduate or professional school				
Current career				
Social and civic involvement				
Interpersonal relationships and family living				
Responsibilities of post-undergraduate life (managing finances, maintaining health, creating a home, etc.)				
Continued learning on my own or outside of a degree program (e.g., learning a new language, professional certification, learning a craft)				

Appendix 5

EXTERNAL CONSULTANTS

Criteria for Selection: External consultants should be selected on the basis of their experience with excellent undergraduate programs and/or with a graduate program to which we would like to be able to send our students. A list of possible consultants, together with a brief statement of their qualifications, should go to the Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement as soon as possible in the review process. After the Dean and Chair have agreed on the choice of consultants, the Chair should issue the invitation to campus, suggesting dates that are workable for the department/program.

Budget: Department/program chairs should make all local travel, lodging, and meal arrangements for the consultants. These expenses may be charged against the curricular review account. The Dean and Chair should discuss the honorarium to be offered to the consultants. The cost of the review, including honoraria to the consultants and all local expenses, should not exceed the budgeted amount.

Schedule for Visit: Departments/programs should plan the consultants' schedule for the campus visit. Visits should allow time for consultants to meet with students as well as with members of the department or program. Many consultants will want to meet with faculty members from outside of the department/program as well. A joint meeting of the consultants with the Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement, the Dean for Faculty Development, and the Provost should be included in the schedule.

Consultants' Report: Consultants should receive materials in advance of the visit. They should receive the following information and documents, as well as other materials that the department/program deems relevant:

- the self-study document
- vitae of faculty in the department/program
- a record of the number of majors in the last ten years
- semester course schedules for the last several years
- sample course syllabi
- departmental assessment reports for the last four years
- the I.S. Handbook
- relevant admissions materials
- a list of representative departmental alumni
- the departmental/program budget

These materials should be submitted to each consultant electronically; no paper copies are necessary. In addition, one electronic copy should also be submitted to the Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement. The consultants' report should be sent to the Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement and a copy to the Department Chair.

Appendix 6

TEN-YEAR CYCLE

ACADEMIC YEAR	DEPARTMENT/PROGRAM
2003-04	AFRICANA STUDIES
	ARCHAEOLOGY
	COMMUNICATION
2004-05	ART AND ART HISTORY
	BIOLOGY
	CULTURAL AREA STUDIES
2005-06	BIOCHEMISTRY AND MOLECULAR BIOLOGY
	CHEMISTRY
2006-07	ENGLISH
2007-08	CHINESE
	FRENCH
	GERMAN
	RUSSIAN STUDIES
	SPANISH
	COMPARATIVE LITERATURE
	EDUCATION
2008-09	CLASSICAL STUDIES
	GEOLOGY
	HISTORY
2009-10	INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
	POLITICAL SCIENCE
2010-11	ECONOMICS/BUSINESS ECONOMICS
	MATHEMATICS/COMPUTER SCIENCE
	PHILOSOPHY
	PHYSICAL EDUCATION
	PHYSICS/CHEMICAL PHYSICS
2011-12	(none)
2012-13	MUSIC
	PSYCHOLOGY
	RELIGIOUS STUDIES
	SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

	THEATRE AND DANCE
	URBAN STUDIES
	COMMUNICATION

Appendix 6

NEXT TEN-YEAR CYCLE

ACADEMIC YEAR	DEPARTMENT/PROGRAM
2013-14	WOMEN'S, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY STUDIES
	AFRICANA STUDIES
	ARCHAEOLOGY
2014-15	ART AND ART HISTORY
	BIOLOGY
	BIOCHEMISTRY AND MOLECULAR BIOLOGY
2015-16	CHEMISTRY
	COMPARATIVE LITERATURE
	EDUCATION
	ENGLISH
2016-17	CHINESE
	CLASSICAL STUDIES
	FRENCH
	GERMAN
	RUSSIAN STUDIES
	SPANISH
2017-18	GEOLOGY
	HISTORY
	INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
2018-19	ECONOMICS/BUSINESS ECONOMICS
	MATHEMATICS/COMPUTER SCIENCE
	POLITICAL SCIENCE
2019-20	PHILOSOPHY
	PHYSICS/CHEMICAL PHYSICS
	PSYCHOLOGY
2020-21	MUSIC
	PHYSICAL EDUCATION
	RELIGIOUS STUDIES

2021-22	SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY
	THEATRE AND DANCE
2022-23	URBAN STUDIES
	WOMEN'S, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY STUDIES