

***Faculty Senate Committee on Rules***  
**Response to Charges**

**Rules Committee members:** Seth Hoelscher (chair), Terrel Gallaway, Kartik Ghosh, Beth Walker, Lanya Lamouria (*ex officio*), Cindy MacGregor (*ex officio*)

**Charge #2**

**Review of Origination of Curricular Proposals (ART VI, SEC 3 and 13)**

Currently the Bylaws state (SEC 13) that “the primary responsibility for developing and revising curriculum resides with the faculty, and the initial formal stages of any such process should be accomplished at the lowest levels of organization within the faculty.” For course or program changes within a department, the department is the responsible entity. However, with the advent of the online Curricular Action Workflow (CAW), the question has been raised about what “origination” means in this context. If a faculty member creates a proposal and then the department approves it, does that constitute origination in and of itself, or does the faculty have the right and responsibility of starting the curricular process in the CAW by submitting the proposal into the workflow, where it then follows the process laid out in Article VI?

The question has arisen because in numerous instances, either department heads or, occasionally, departmental staff members have been inputting the proposals into the CAW. This poses several potential issues, including the possibility that a staff member would take responsibility for errors in a submitted proposal. We ask the Rules Committee to review the process and clarify who is responsible for submitting the proposal into the CAW.

## Overview:

In discussing the role of departments, Section 3 offers little direction about the duties of faculty or what is meant by *origination*. Section 3 A stresses the autonomy of the department in originating and perfecting curricular changes while section 3 B goes straight to the duties of the department head. Neither section mentions faculty, the actual CAW process, or what happens before CAW.

- “**A** Each academic department or special academic program shall have autonomy in originating and perfecting; or in considering, altering, adopting, or deleting courses and programs of study as part of the curriculum in its discipline when such courses or programs are referred to the academic department.”
- “**B** After being perfected by the academic department or special academic program, the academic department head or the chair of the special academic program shall forward proposals in this manner:...”

A bit more clarity is provided by Section 13, Origination of Curricular Proposals. It highlights that curricular proposals must originate with the lowest level of organization relevant to the change:

- “The primary responsibility for developing and revising curriculum resides with the faculty, and the initial formal stages of any such process should be accomplished at the lowest levels of organization within the faculty.”

Typically, this would be from departments (or equivalent)

- “Any new academic degree program, major, minor, option, or certificate must originate with the formal sponsorship of one or more academic departments.”
- “Any substantive change to an existing academic degree program, major, minor, option, or certificate must originate with the formal sponsorship of the academic unit responsible for overseeing that program, major, minor, option, or certificate.”

Importantly, there are also injunctions about what must not happen. Namely, curriculum changes should not come top-down from Senate committees or from administrators:

- Under no circumstance should a proposal for a new academic degree program, major, minor, option, or certificate, or a proposal for a substantive change to an existing academic degree program, major, minor, option, or certificate formally originate from one of the academic college

councils, the Graduate Council, CGEIP, the EPPC, or any other higher-level body within the faculty governance structure.

- Likewise, under no circumstances should a proposal for a new academic degree program, major, minor, option, or certificate, or a proposal for a substantive change to an existing academic degree program, major, minor, option, or certificate formally originate from the administration of one of the academic colleges, the Graduate College, or any other unit of the administration.

Significantly, Section 13 acknowledges that administrators and other may have relevant information and good ideas that can inform the curricular process. This suggests that neither ideas, nor the communication of ideas for curricular changes, count as the *origination* of the process. They are prior to the somewhat vague formal beginning:

- Ideas for new curriculum or substantive changes to existing curriculum are always welcome, regardless of where they originate, but such ideas should be communicated to the relevant groups of faculty members as efficiently as possible so that the process of developing or revising the curriculum in question can formally begin at the lowest level of the faculty governance structure.

One final clue to origination comes from the CAW itself. The form itself asks: “What is the date that this course change was approved by departmental or program faculty?” This clearly indicates the origination happens prior to the CAW. To boost transparency and help prevent heavy-handed interference from above, the form also asks: “How did you determine the need for this change? Check all boxes that apply or specify other.”

### **Recommendation by Committee:**

The Committee Recommends *no* changes to the *Bylaws*.

On this narrow charge, regarding what is meant by the origination of the curricular process, the only reasonable conclusion is that it must happen before the CAW, since the form itself requires *prior* approval of the faculty. Faculty discussion and a vote are the important parts. Moreover, there are significant advantages (for both faculty and the process) to having the CAW started by individuals who have the time, information, aptitude, or inclination to correctly complete the electronic form.

However, there is a related concern that whoever completes the CAW form may be viewed as the originator, or the best contact person, for the curriculum proposal. The Committee suggests that CAW could be improved if the initial forms required contact information for a faculty member who is linked to the proposal.

Finally, it is possible that the entire Article VI might benefit from some revisions to improve clarity. Possible areas for improvement might include: more clarity on the formal origination of the process, more clarity about the role of faculty (as opposed to their department), a closer fit with the actual CAW process, and the governance structure for modifying the CAW process. If such changes are warranted, we leave these for possible future charges and/or an *ad hoc* committee.

## **Current Language of the *Bylaws***

### **ART VI CURRICULAR PROCESS**

#### **SEC 3 Responsibility of Academic Departments**

- A Each academic department or special academic program shall have autonomy in originating and perfecting; or in considering, altering, adopting, or deleting courses and programs of study as part of the curriculum in its discipline when such courses or programs are referred to the academic department.
- B After being perfected by the academic department or special academic program, the academic department head or the chair of the special academic program shall forward proposals in this manner:
- (1) After review/comment by the college dean as described in SEC 5 below, course and program proposals for MS in Education and Educational Specialist Degrees shall be forwarded to the chair, Educator Preparation Provider Council.
  - (2) After review/comment by the college dean as described in SEC 5 below, program proposals for general education, course and program proposals for special academic programs, proposals for other multi-college courses and programs, proposals affecting undergraduate degrees offered by two or more colleges, and proposals affecting the general requirements for undergraduate certificates shall be forwarded to the chair, Council on General Education and Intercollegiate Programs.
  - (3) After review/comment by the college dean as described in SEC 5 below, proposals affecting graduate courses (600 level and above), graduate programs, graduate degrees, and graduate certificates shall be forwarded to the chair, Graduate Council.
  - (4) All other course and program proposals, including one-time-only, experimental, and intersession proposals, shall be forwarded to the chair of the college council of the college in which the academic department serves.

## SEC 13 Origination of Curricular Proposals

The primary responsibility for developing and revising curriculum resides with the faculty, and the initial formal stages of any such process should be accomplished at the lowest levels of organization within the faculty. Therefore, the curricular development and review process shall be reaffirmed and amplified as follows:

Any new academic degree program, major, minor, option, or certificate must originate with the formal sponsorship of one or more academic departments. Any new interdisciplinary or cross-disciplinary academic degree program, major, minor, option, or certificate which is to be administered from outside the structure of a single academic department must originate with the formal sponsorship of two or more academic departments/schools, including every academic department whose courses will constitute either nine or more credit hours or 30% or more of the total credit hours listed as requirements and/or options. All such required sponsorship at the academic department level must be obtained before the proposed new academic degree program, major, minor, option, or certificate can be formally considered by any higher level of the faculty governance structure (College Council, Graduate Council, CGEIP, EPPC, Faculty Senate). (As a courtesy, each academic department that will have one or more courses included in a proposed new degree program, major, minor, option, or certificate should be consulted to determine that they intend to continue offering the course(s) in question and that they will be able to accommodate the anticipated increase in demand. However, in the case of an interdisciplinary or cross-disciplinary program, formal sponsorship is not required unless the number of courses reaches the nine-hour or 30% threshold, and in the case of a non-interdisciplinary program (i.e., a program to be administered from within the structure of a single academic department), formal sponsorship by outside academic departments is not required regardless of the number of their courses included.)

Any substantive change to an existing academic degree program, major, minor, option, or certificate must originate with the formal sponsorship of the academic unit responsible for overseeing that program, major, minor, option, or certificate. In the case of a degree program, major, minor, option, or certificate offered through an individual academic department, the relevant academic unit would be that department. In the case of each “Special Academic Program,” any interdisciplinary or cross-disciplinary degree program, major, minor, option, or certificate

offered outside the structure of a single academic department, the relevant academic unit would be the faculty committee charged with overseeing the program, major, minor, option, or certificate in question; references to “academic department” within these Bylaws related to the curricular process shall be understood to apply to the faculty committee. Such formal sponsorship by the relevant academic unit must be obtained before the proposed substantive change can be formally considered by any higher level of the faculty governance structure (College Council, Graduate Council, CGEIP, EPPC, Faculty Senate).

Under no circumstance should a proposal for a new academic degree program, major, minor, option, or certificate, or a proposal for a substantive change to an existing academic degree program, major, minor, option, or certificate formally originate from one of the academic college councils, the Graduate Council, CGEIP, the EPPC, or any other higher-level body within the faculty governance structure. Likewise, under no circumstances should a proposal for a new academic degree program, major, minor, option, or certificate, or a proposal for a substantive change to an existing academic degree program, major, minor, option, or certificate formally originate from the administration of one of the academic colleges, the Graduate College, or any other unit of the administration. Ideas for new curriculum or substantive changes to existing curriculum are always welcome, regardless of where they originate, but such ideas should be communicated to the relevant groups of faculty members as efficiently as possible so that the process of developing or revising the curriculum in question can formally begin at the lowest level of the faculty governance structure