University Committee on Curriculum (UCC)

Open Forum
Proposed Changes in Policy, Rules, and/or Taxonomic Practices in Curriculum
April 1, 2008
Agenda

- Opening Remarks
  - Dr. Gillian Bice, Chair, University Committee on Curriculum
- Presentation of Proposals
  - Dr. Gillian Bice, Chair, University Committee on Curriculum
  - Doug McKenna, Associate Registrar for Certification and Staff Support to the UCC
- Response to submitted questions
Process and Time Frame
Path of Curricular Changes

College

University Committee on Curriculum – Subcommittees A, B, C, D

University Committee on Curriculum – Full Committee

University Committee on Academic Policy

Academic Council

University Graduate Council
Process

• Every comment/question/concern will be considered by the University Committee on Curriculum prior to completion of a Final Draft of the Consolidated Proposal

• Any final proposal or series of proposals sent to UCAP and/or UGC will be reviewed and approved or not approved by its members
  • These committees, including UCC, have student representatives

• Any proposals from UCAP and/or UGC will be sent to the Executive Committee of Academic Council (ECAC)
  • ECAC will refer to other committees as appropriate, and then to Faculty and/or Academic Council
Time Frame

- The implementation of changes would provide sufficient time for program review and for currently enrolled students to complete requirements
  - No student currently enrolled in a program will be impacted

- Curricular policy changes always have future effective dates
  - The semester the student selects a major, minor, etc. is the effective date for that student

- Any potential end-dates would be timed in consultation with the unit(s) that administers the program
Background and Context
Background and Context

- The recent addition of “minors” at MSU created new curricular options, opportunities and issues (e.g., “double-dipping”)

- MSU’s curricular structure is very complex

- When one aspect of the curricular structure is changed it affects other aspects of the curriculum

  - *Names and parts of the curriculum (taxonomy) need to complement one another clearly so that degree progress is readily apparent*

  - *Inconsistency in use of terminology leads to ambiguity for students, faculty, and external constituents*
    - HOWEVER, undergraduate and graduate terminology can be different
Perceived curricular problems may result from outdated policies, rules and/or taxonomic practices

- *Current use of program labels may not be most appropriate when viewed in larger context*
  - E.g., Options - discontinued
  - E.g., Dance specialization
- *Academic policies are viable only if implementation meets current curricular needs*

The administration of a program does not need to change for its taxonomic name to change (minor, certificate, etc.)

These proposals have **no impact** on teacher education terminology or requirements (e.g., Teaching Minors)
UCC Goals
Goals of UCC

- To have academic program policy, terminology and practices informed by broad-based input

- To be proactive and responsive to the needs of a changing academic and job climate

- To improve curricular quality and serve students well

- To simplify terminology and taxonomy if possible, but with recognition that simplification must not compromise quality
Goals (cont.)

- To improve **clarity** and consistency internally and externally
  - Make it easier for students to monitor / track their progress
  - Bring MSU in line with the best practices at other institutions
  - Make MSU credentials more universally recognizable

- To increase **flexibility**
  - For students when selecting a program of study to meet their intellectual and career goals
  - For units when creating programs to meet current and projected needs and increase their competitiveness and marketability

- To maintain the **integrity** of credentials earned at MSU
Proposals
Proposal 1: Re-defining Minors

- Enable departments to offer a minor in a field of study where no major is offered and eliminate the requirement that the minor must carry the same field-of-study name as the major.
Proposal 1 (cont.)

- Current policy is overly limiting
  - “Minors must carry the same name as the major.”
    - Guidelines for Academic Minors
  - Removing the limitation would allow departments greater flexibility in developing minors

- UCC is considering additional wording stating that minors can be either disciplinary or interdisciplinary
Proposal 2: Conversion of Specializations to Minors

- Convert all current Undergraduate specializations to minors. Eliminate Undergraduate specializations as an academic offering at Michigan State University.
Proposal 2 (cont.)

- Specializations were developed when minors were not available at MSU

- “Specialization” is unique to MSU
  - “Minor” is widely used and better understood term for an academic program
  - Renaming specializations as minors will increase understanding of the MSU credential for external constituents

- Distinction of disciplinary (minor) and interdisciplinary (specialization) is increasingly blurred
Proposal 2 (cont.)

- Minors require a minimum of 15 credits

- There are 49 undergraduate specializations (43 with students enrolled)
  - One currently enrolled specialization requires fewer than 15 credits (i.e., 14-16, depending on the courses selected to fulfill the requirements)
  - One specialization (no students enrolled currently) requires 11 credits (Piano Pedagogy)
Proposal 3: Define Major Requirements

- Define ‘credits required for the major’ as any requirement specifically articulated in Academic Programs under the entry, ‘The following requirements for the major’ to differentiate what constitutes a University, college, and major requirement.
Proposal 3 (cont.)

• The credits/courses requirement for a given major is not always clear in the Academic Programs catalog
  • *Policies relating to the number of credits counted toward completion of minors, additional majors, etc. are dependent on a clear understanding of what is or is not “required for the major”*
    • It is important for students, faculty, and advisers to be able to readily understand how components of an undergraduate degree program relate to one another
Proposal 4: Unique Content for Minors

• Specify that at least 12 credits counted toward the requirements for a student’s minor must not be used to fulfill the requirements for the student’s major. Twelve credits must be unique to the student’s minor.
Proposal 4 (cont.)

- There is currently no policy that addresses the issue of “double-dipping”

- The presence of a credential on a student’s transcript is seen by many as an indication that specific, *additional work* was completed in the fulfillment of that academic program
  - *This is the practice at all schools in the CIC and most schools in the AAU*
Proposal 5: Relation of Student’s Minor to Student’s Major

- Establish that students may not pursue a minor in the same field of study in which they are pursuing a major

- Alternate wording:
  - Establish that a student cannot pursue a minor when completing a major of the same name within a field of study
Proposal 5 (cont.)

- There is currently no policy preventing this

- Eligibility for students to pursue a major and minor with different names in the same/similar field of study would be up to the academic unit offering the programs
  - *Example:* If History offered a Minor in Southeast Asian History, the History Department would decide if History majors were eligible to complete the minor
Proposal 6: “Linked” Bachelor’s/Master’s

• Allow a maximum of 9 approved credits from the Undergraduate level to be applied to a “linked” Bachelor’s / Master’s degree program.

• Alternate wording:
  • Create a new category of Master’s degree programs that are specifically linked to a bachelor’s degree. Allow a maximum of 9 approved credits to be applied to the linked Master’s degree from the linked Bachelor’s degree.
Proposal 6 (cont.)

- Applies only to highly qualified students in specific, approved programs

- Students accepted into linked Bachelor’s / Master’s programs would not be allowed to transfer additional credits into the “linked” program
  - **Maximum** of 9 credits from the undergraduate degree program would be accepted toward the graduate degree program

- Requires a change to the long-standing policy of requiring a minimum of 30 credits beyond the Bachelor’s degree for a Master’s degree
Proposal 6 (cont.)

- Improves MSU’s ability to compete with peer institutions, nationally and internationally

- Provides opportunity for academically strong and motivated students to complete a Master’s degree in less time

- Enhances student’s ability to engage with faculty research as an undergraduate and maintain continuity into their graduate program
Proposal 6 (cont.)

- The current Dual Enrollment policy is student-centered and remains unchanged
  - *Students enrolled at two levels, completing all credits for both degrees*

- The “linked” Bachelor’s / Master’s degree program is program-centered
  - *Students complete the Bachelor’s degree before enrolling in the “linked” Master’s degree*
Proposal 7: Graduate Certificates

- Redefine the policies and procedures for Graduate Certificates.
Proposal 7 (cont.)

- “Graduate Certificate” is a nationally recognized credential
  - It is understood that issuance of a graduate certificate signifies the certificate holder possesses specified skills or competency or has completed specified professional training

- Interest in and demand for graduate certificate programs has increased significantly
  - Consistent with national and international trends

- Departments would be able to develop, propose, and offer a wider variety of “transcriptable” Graduate Certificates
**Proposal 7 (cont.)**

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<th>Category</th>
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<td>&quot;University Graduate Certification in...”</td>
<td>GC</td>
<td>Proposed name change</td>
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Proposal 8: University-level Graduate Certificates

- Change names:
  - Certificate in College Teaching \( \Rightarrow \) University Graduate Certification in College Teaching
  - Certificate in Community Engagement \( \Rightarrow \) University Graduate Certification in Community Engagement
Proposal 8 (cont.)

- Certificate in College Teaching is an exception to existing policy
  - *It is a distinct entity unconnected with a degree but is transcriptable*

- Name change is reflective of the Graduate School’s and the University’s role in this type of Graduate Certificate offering

- Provides a clear indication that these are a separate category of Graduate Certificate program
  - *Allows for a different approval structure*
Proposal 9: Convert Grad Specializations to Certificates

- Convert Graduate specializations to Graduate Certificate programs; eliminate Graduate specializations as an academic offering at Michigan State University.
Proposal 9 (cont.)

- “Graduate Certificate” is a recognized credential
  - “Specialization” is unique to MSU and does not necessarily translate to external MSU constituents
  - With an increasingly international student population, and an increasing international focus, Michigan State needs to use established and well-understood terminology
Proposal 10: Transfer Credits from Graduate Certificates

- Allow a maximum of 9 credits to be transferred from the Graduate Certificate level to a Master’s degree program.
Proposal 10 (cont.)

- Currently no policy addresses the number of credits that can transfer from a Graduate Certification (GC) to a Master’s degree program.

- Allowing 9 credits would establish a policy consistent with the number of credits currently allowed to be transferred to a Master’s degree program from an outside institution.
Proposal 11: Transfer Credits from Lifelong Education

- Reduce the number of Lifelong Education credits eligible to be transferred to a Master’s degree program from 10 to 9 credits.
Proposal 11 (cont.)

- Current policy allows a greater number of credits to be transferred from a non-matriculated program than from a matriculated program
  - 9 credits are allowed to be transferred into a Master’s degree program from all other categories except Lifelong education
  - May be seen as devaluing a student’s participation as a matriculant in a Master’s degree program
Proposal 12: Combined Maximum Transfer Credits

- Allow a combined maximum of 12 credits to be applied to a Master’s degree program from all categories: transfer from other institutions, Lifelong Education, and Graduate Certificate programs.
Proposal 12 (cont.)

• Currently no policy addressing the maximum number of credits that can be applied toward a Master’s degree program
  • Possible scenario based on current policy:
    • 9 credits in transfer, 9 credits from the GC level, and 9 credits from Lifelong Education, for a total of 27 credits accepted

• Department determination of the applicability of credits to Master’s degree programs is maintained within a holistic context
Discussion of Issues

- Questions submitted will be addressed as they pertain to specific proposals.
- Each proposal will be reviewed in order, and discussion limited in order to provide time for all proposals.
- Time left at the end of the session will be open for additional discussion.