SHARED CURRICULUM GOVERNANCE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON

The curriculum review and approval process at UMW is grounded on the principle of shared governance, recognizing that both the faculty and the administration have important roles to play in the process of approving educational programs. The primary responsibility for curriculum development rests with the faculty. Curriculum proposals begin with action by individual faculty and departments. Faculty curriculum committees at the college and the university level are central to the review and approval process. The college and university faculty governance bodies have an explicit review and approval step. Involvement, review, and approval by the faculty ensures that (1) programs contain content and approaches that reflect current thinking within a field of study, and (2) that the curriculum is appropriate for the students enrolled. Administrative review and approval ensures that educational programs are consistent with the mission of the institution and that the resources, organization, and commitment necessary to carry out those programs are available.

Within this system of shared curriculum governance, each constituency carries out its separate but complementary roles and does so in an environment of open discussion. Whenever one level of review disagrees with a proposed action, the reasons for the disagreement must be communicated in writing to the prior level of review at the time when the disapproval is made known. The opportunity to address differences of opinion and to revise and resubmit a proposal for further consideration is assured.

GENERAL CURRICULUM APPROVAL PROCEDURES

Course and program curriculum changes always take effect in the fall semester. For a curriculum action to be implemented, it must have received all required approvals by the posted final deadline date. While this exact date changes from year to year, it generally falls in late January. This deadline ensures that there will be adequate time to update the academic catalogs to reflect the changes and to update the next online *Academic Catalog*, which is the official course and curriculum publication at the University.

Depending on the action desired, the curriculum approval process may include a separate step for approvals by the College Dean and the Provost. For proposals to change to existing courses, or to create a new course, there is no approval step by either the Dean or the Provost. Proposals to change existing academic programs (minors, majors, concentrations, certificates) require approval by the Dean of the college in which the program resides and the Provost. Proposals to create new academic programs -- new majors, minors, concentrations, and certificates – also require approval of the Dean and the Provost. A proposal to create a new degree program requires the additional approval of the Rector and Visitors of the University of Mary Washington and the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV). Approval by the Board of Visitors must be obtained before the new degree proposal is submitted to SCHEV. A proposal to change the credit hours, delivery modality, or central focus of an existing degree program must also be approved by the Board of Visitors and SCHEV.

The general curriculum approval procedural steps were initially approved in 2012 by action of the University Faculty Council (at its meeting on March 13, 2012) and have been in effect ever since. In 2020, the University adopted a new online Curriculum Inventory Management system (CIM) as the means by which the workflow needed to carry out curriculum changes would be managed. The Office of the Provost is responsible for oversight of the CIM system. UMW’s CIM Manager is Kevin Caffrey ([kcaffrey@umw.edu](mailto:kcaffrey@umw.edu)).