

Extracted from the document *Proposed New Academic Policy Revisions and Guidance on Policy Interpretation* posted on the CoC web site and approved by the Committee on Instruction November 4<sup>th</sup> 2009

### **Request for greater latitude in the use of Administrative discretion when making “minor” changes to existing course descriptions or curriculum descriptions**

The Office of Instruction and Graduate Studies would like to request authority from COI to handle minor changes to course and curricula administratively, avoiding the rather cumbersome but necessary process of submission and review to COI that would remain in place for more substantial course or curriculum changes, as well as all new course and curriculum proposals.

My primary litmus test for what might constitute a “minor” change would center on whether the proposal includes any significant changes to the thematic content of catalog listings, particularly significant changes in course objectives, pedagogy, or methods, or if there are potential institutional or interdepartmental impacts that may be significant and require coordination with one or more departments or service units outside the proposing department (these would include most changes to service courses like General Chemistry or Ecology, or revisions to many courses which may then indicate changes to specific space or technology demands, such as a GIS course or many lab and studio courses).

Minor changes that I would propose might be handled administratively without troubling COI might then include:

- Changes in course delivery timing (i.e. change from spring to fall, or sophomore to junior year in a particular required curriculum), as long as the proposed change is accompanied by a statement from the department that they have analyzed and taken into consideration the internal impacts on course/curriculum delivery, scheduling, etc. This is actually easier than it may sound, as in most cases, it is BECAUSE of this type of analysis that a department proposes such a change.
- Minor descriptive language changes (i.e. a few words, not wholesale additions or deletions of sentences or paragraphs) in catalog descriptions, such as those intended to reflect an update in the state of the discipline or best practices.
- Changes to prerequisite courses or skill/knowledge requirements, particularly those changes which may reflect a practice that has already been implemented, but which is being formalized in the process of curricular “housekeeping.”
- Changes which may reflect the change or imposition of student fees which have already been reviewed and implemented through parallel or previous administrative actions (such as field trip fees or printing charges)
- Minor changes to course titles or course numbering, as long as the department can demonstrate that the proposed change has been considered and accounted for in curriculum listings, prerequisite listings, etc., which could also be considered as “minor” changes.

In all cases, I would also consider minor changes to be limited to ONLY one or two of the types of changes noted above in any one proposal. If a proposed change includes multiple elements within a single course description (e.g. prerequisite changes, scheduling changes, changes in technology, and revised course title and catalog description, all in one proposal), I would say it probably would need a more complete COI review.

Finally, I would intend that all minor changes to courses and curricula would be reported to COI and the Faculty, which would always maintain the prerogative to request further more detailed review of any individual proposal.