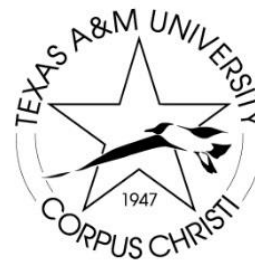# 11.10.99.C0.04   Distance Education Programs

Approved: September 8, 2017
Revised: February 26, 2018
Next Scheduled Review: February 26, 2023

Procedure Summary

Development of new distance education programs may be implemented at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi following approval by the appropriate university advisory groups, President's Cabinet, the Texas A&M University System (TAMUS), the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). The procedure outlines the development and approval process for creating new distance education programs, as well as, the responsibilities of involved parties. Development of new distance education courses and changes in the mode of delivery of existing courses are addressed in University Procedure *11.10.99.C0.03, Development of Courses and Catalog Revisions*.

Procedure

1.   GENERAL

The process outlined in this procedure applies to any program that a student can complete more than 50% of the degree online.

2.   DEVELOPMENT OF NEW DISTANCE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

2.1.   Before beginning a proposal, support for the development of the program must be secured from the department chair, college dean, director of Distance Education and Learning Technologies, and Office of the Provost.

2.2.   After receiving approval to develop the proposal, the developers of the degree will follow the routing process as outlined in section 4 of this procedure.

2.3.   System Policy *11.10, Academic Program Requests* explains the system's guiding principles for distance education program requests. Further information on criteria, standards, and processes for approval can be found on the TAMUS website under the Office of Academic Affairs.

2.4.   Requests for new distance education programs will be developed according to the rules of the THECB. The THECB provides information on the requirements for

distance education programs on its website under the Academic Quality and Workforce Division.

3.   RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE CURRICULUM REVIEW PROCESS

    3.1.   The faculty originators are responsible for:

        3.1.1.   Obtaining initial support from the department chair, college dean, director of Distance Education and Learning Technologies, and the Office of the Provost.

        3.1.2.   Presenting the supported idea to the department faculty for a vote.

    3.2.   Department chairs are responsible for:

        3.2.1.   Ensuring that proposals are properly prepared and all necessary forms are completed, including attachments (e.g., syllabi, letter of support from the director of Distance Education and Learning Technologies, and letters of support or votes from any affected departments or committees).

        3.2.2.   Ensuring that the course rotation can support new online courses. If an online degree program is proposed, it is expected that a student will be able to take a full load of online classes each semester.

        3.2.3.   Ensuring that all information being entered into the approved university catalog database is correct.

        3.2.4.   Alerting other department chairs if the curriculum will involve their departments. Supporting documentation from the affected departments must be included in the proposal.

        3.2.5.   Monitoring the proposed program for quality and compliance with the standards of the university, TAMUS, THECB, and SACSCOC.

        3.2.6.   Documenting the departmental faculty vote.

        3.2.7.   Routing the complete proposal to the college curriculum committee.

    3.3.   The college curriculum committees, whose makeup is defined by the college, are responsible for:

        3.3.1.   Reviewing the materials for quality, integrity, academic rigor, and purpose.

        3.3.2.   Considering if the changes support the university's mission.

        3.3.3.   Checking for potential duplication between disciplines within the college.

3.3.4. Reaching out to the faculty originators and the department chairs should anything need clarification.

3.3.5. Routing recommendations to the respective college dean.

3.4. College deans and their designated staff are responsible for

3.4.1. Ensuring that the faculty on curriculum committees are knowledgeable about the process and the standards for distance education programs.

3.4.2. Working with the departments and programs to ensure that any changes requested by the majority of the college curriculum committee are addressed.

3.4.3. Holding a vote of the college faculty if required by the college's faculty handbook.

3.4.4. Assuming responsibility for the completeness of materials, copy editing, and compliance with THECB policies.

3.4.5. Routing to the Division of Academic Affairs.

3.5. The designated staff in the Division of Academic Affairs are responsible for:

3.5.1. Preparing materials for the University Curriculum Committee.

3.5.2. Notifying surrounding institutions of the proposed new degree(s).

3.6. The University Curriculum Committee (UCC) will be chaired by the chair of the Faculty Senate's Academic Affairs Committee. Details on the committee membership can be found on the official Committee and Councils webpage. The UCC is responsible for:

3.6.1. Reviewing the materials for quality, integrity, academic rigor, and purpose.

3.6.2. Evaluating proposals to ensure that they support the university's mission.

3.6.3. Avoiding unnecessary duplication of programs and conflicts of interest with other existing programs.

3.6.4. Ensuring that the proposals meet the quality standards set forth by the university, TAMUS, THECB, and SACSCOC.

3.6.5. Routing recommendations to the Faculty Senate.

3.6.6.   Holding meetings twice per long semester in different months.

3.7.   The Faculty Senate is responsible for:

      3.7.1.   Reviewing recommendations by the UCC.

      3.7.2.   Considering the viability of the proposals, including faculty workload.

      3.7.3.   Voting on the proposal

      3.7.4.   Routing Faculty Senate actions to the Division of Academic Affairs.

4.   INTERNAL REVIEW OF NEW DISTANCE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

4.1.   The originator secures the support of the department chair, dean, director of Distance Education and Learning Technologies, and Office of the Provost.

4.2.   The appropriate forms must be completed in the approved university catalog database. Requested syllabi should include the course number, the name of the course, a course description, students learning outcomes, major assignments, required readings, grading criteria, and a course schedule.

4.3.   According to the SACSOC Resource Manual, curriculum approval will begin at the department or program level and be controlled by the faculty. Therefore, the degree proposal must be reviewed and voted on by departmental faculty first and then forwarded to the college's curriculum committee for consideration. It is encouraged to note the college's curriculum committee's meeting schedule to prevent possible delays.

4.4.   The dean's office will work with the originator and the department chair to ensure that any changes requested by the majority of the college committee are made in the approved university catalog database. If the department faculty disagree with the changes requested, an explanation of the disagreement must be noted and forwarded with the proposal. If the college's faculty handbook calls for it, an all-college faculty vote must be taken before the dean's recommendation is forwarded.

4.5.   Materials will be forwarded to the UCC. Prior to the committees' meeting(s), members shall share proposals with their constituencies in order to solicit feedback to bring to the committee meetings. An agenda must be sent to the dean's office at least five (5) business days prior to the meeting. In order to facilitate the necessary discussion, meetings will be conducted in a medium to encourage synchronous interactions (e.g., face-to-face, WebEx, conference call). Anyone in the university community is welcome to attend UCC meetings but will need to be recognized by the chair for speaking privileges.

4.6. A representative from the Division of Academic Affairs will contact originators and department chairs regarding any changes recommended by the UCC. If there is a difference of opinion regarding changes, then the Division of Academic Affairs will facilitate conversations to collaboratively find solutions. The President has the authority to make a final decision.

4.7. Members of the Faculty Senate's Academic Affairs Committee will present their recommendations regarding new programs to the Faculty Senate. Voting will generally take place at either the meeting of the initial presentation or the following month's meeting. Recommendations will be routed to the Division of Academic Affairs, who will work with the originator, department chair, and dean's staff to prepare a recommendation for the President's Cabinet.

4.8. President's Cabinet is the final internal approver of new degree programs and programs that are moved online. With President's Cabinet approval, these program recommendations will continue on to the external review process detailed in section 5 of this procedure.

5. EXTERNAL REVIEW OF NEW DISTANCE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

5.1. Following President's Cabinet approval, the Office of the President will submit proposal requests to TAMUS, in accordance with the process specified in System Regulation *11.10, Academic Program Requests*.

5.2. Following approval by TAMUS, the TAMUS staff will submit requests for proposed distance education programs to the THECB for approval.

5.3. Distance education programs that qualify as a substantive change may require additional forms and review by SACSCOC. Substantive change is detailed in University Procedure *11.10.99.C0.05, Substantive Change*. While not all programs require a full review by SACSCOC, many still require notification.

5.4. New distance education programs will not be advertised until the Provost or their designee informs the department that final approval is expected by a proposed date. Students cannot be recruited or promised enrollment in programs until final approval is given and the university receives notice.

Related Statutes, Policies or Requirements

System Policy *11.10, Academic Program Requests*
University Procedure *11.10.99.C0.01, Development of Academic Degree Programs*
University Procedure *11.10.99.C0.02, Development of Certificate Programs*
University Procedure *11.10.99.C0.03, Development of Courses and Catalog Revisions*
University Procedure *11.10.99.C0.05, Substantive Change*

Contact Office

Contact for clarification and interpretation: Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
(361) 825-2722