

COA'S GUIDE FOR DEPARTMENT & PROGRAM CURRICULAR REVISION PROPOSALS

Overview

A strong curricular revision proposal typically contains the following sections: (1) rationale, (2) summary of changes to the major/minor, (3) feasibility, (4) assessment plan, (5) strikeout and clean catalog copy, (6) supporting appendices, and (7) proposals for new courses and changes to existing courses.

Note: Reviewers generally appreciate direct and concise explanations of these points.

Rationale

The "Rationale" section summarizes the basis for changing a major/minor, and should include some discussion of why a curricular change is proposed, such as important changes in the discipline, departmental review (whether internal or external), changes in resources including new faculty or facilities, etc.

Issues that may arise with regard to the *Rationale* underlying a curricular revision include:

- How does the department *know* that a curricular revision is warranted? Has the department invested in a self-assessment and/or external review to identify issues to be addressed? If not, when are they next scheduled for one?
- Are there particular circumstances that influence the development of the curricular revision, such as conditions attached to a faculty hire, the development of particular spaces, etc.

Proposed Changes to the Major and Minor

This section should summarize changes to the major/minor, including courses to be deleted, added, or changed. It is often helpful to list these courses within the body of the proposal; additionally, two appendices—one summarizing the proposed changes to existing courses and a second summarizing the proposed course offerings—are strongly recommended.

- Do all regular course offerings include a description of when they are taught?
- Wherever courses are domained, is the designation appropriate?
- Are there clear and accurate lists of courses to be added, deleted, and changed?
- Does the new major/minor allow for courses in other departments to count towards the new major/minor? If so, have the other department(s) been consulted or notified?
- Has the department considered how its students will satisfy the capstone requirement?
- Has the department considered how off-campus study plans may be accommodated?

Feasibility

This section concerns the viability of the proposed new curriculum given current staffing and resources of the department and the college. Accordingly, the section should discuss the department's FTEs (full-time equivalent), current faculty participating in 5+1, and plans for transitioning any remaining faculty (including any new faculty) to 5+1. Additionally, the section should address the course schedule of department faculty with regard to meeting the needs of students, the department, and the college. An appendix that summarizes course teaching rotation over a 4-5 year period provides an *essential* demonstration of the feasibility of the new curriculum.

Issues that may arise with regard to the *Feasibility* of a new curriculum include:

- Are courses offered with sufficient regularity and predictability for students to complete the major/minor?
- Are faculty teaching loads balanced between introductory and upper-level courses?
- Has the department taken sabbatical leaves into account in developing this curriculum?
- Is the department offering a reasonable number of FYIs?
- Is the department contributing to other “all college” needs (initiatives, domains, skills, LAP, capstone, interdisciplinary programs)?
- Do the faculty teaching loads described in this section correspond with those provided in the appendices?

Timetable and Transition Plan

The transition plan needs to identify *when* the new curriculum goes into effect, particularly with regard to the existing college catalog. It also needs to detail how current students can fulfill the existing major/minor requirements while the department transitions to the new curriculum.

Issues that may arise with regard to the *Timetable and Transition Plan* for a new curriculum include:

- Does the transition plan identify appropriate courses that can be substituted for courses in the existing major?
- Does the transition plan cover the four years during which current first-year students may opt to complete the existing major?

Department Goals

Starting in 2017/18 COA requests that all departments add their department/program-wide learning goals to the catalog copy. Please include them in this proposal.

Assessment Plan

This section should outline the plan for ensuring that the department learning goals and the intended outcomes of the curriculum revision are being met. Often, this assessment can overlap with the departmental self-study process and faculty development, and this section should address those connections. Assessment plans should consider the intended effects on student learning outcomes as well as implementation questions related to enrollment and staffing. Considering the assessment plan early in the process, particularly during conversations about goals of the curriculum and rationale for changes, can be a valuable way to sharpen focus and language.

Issues that may arise with regard to the *Assessment Plan* for a new curriculum include:

- Are the outcomes being assessed directly linked to the rationale for the revision?
- Is the assessment plan feasible, given time and resource constraints of the department?
- Is there a clear timetable for the assessment?
- Does the assessment plan include a mechanism for acting on the assessment results?

The Office of Institutional Research, Assessment, and Planning can provide guidance and suggest resources for departments developing curricular assessment plans.

Strikeout and clean catalog copy

Strikeout and clean catalog copy should be included for the *complete* requirements section of the major and minor; any changes or additions to course descriptions should be made with individual course proposals (Course Change or New Course proposal forms). Current requirement can be copied and pasted from the College Catalog posted on college web site (www.beloit.edu/academics/catalogs/) and revised appropriately. The preferred style is to use ~~strikeout~~ for text that will be eliminated and underline for new text.

While a department may occasionally make edits, rarely does a department revise its catalog copy. Therefore the revision of a curriculum should be taken as an opportunity to update the department's vision for its majors, particularly with regard to the organization, language, and punctuation used in laying out the requirements.

Issues that occasionally arise with regard to the *Strikeout and Clean Catalog Copy* include:

- Are the department/program-wide learning goals clearly stated?
- Are the requirements in a logical order?
- Are the requirements written and punctuated in a parallel structure?
- Are the requirements easy to understand and use?

Appendices

Appendix A. Proposed Changes to Existing Course Offerings – A new curriculum often requires changes to existing courses. If only a few courses are in need of changes, individual Course Change Proposal forms are preferred. However, if changes are sought for numerous courses, this is best accomplished using a table to summarize changes to a course prefix, number, title, domain, frequency taught, and prerequisites (which—as “for information items,” are otherwise not included in the Senate agenda). Below is a suggested organization for the Proposed Changes to Existing Course Offerings table.

Current Catalog Information [prefix, no. title, freq, prerequisite]	Course Change							Revised Catalog Information [prefix, no. title, freq, prerequisite]
	delete	prefix	no.	title	dom	freq	pre-req	
LA 176 An Introduction to the Liberal Arts. Offered every fall. Prerequisite: Sophomore standing.			X	X	X	X	X	LA 101 Surveying the Liberal Arts. (3B) Offered every semester.
LA 214 History of the Liberal	X							

Appendix B: Proposed Course Offerings – This table summarizes the information discussed in the *Proposed Changes to the Major and Minor* section of the proposal. Including this information in one table is extremely helpful in both the development and review of the proposal. Below is a suggested organization for the Proposed Course Offerings table.

Dept	No.	Course Name	Status	Role in New Curriculum	Frequency Taught*	Prerequisite	X-list
LA	101	Surveying the Liberal Arts (3B)	Existing	Required	Every semester	none	
LA	214	History of the Liberal Arts	Deleted				
LA	201	Doing the Liberal Arts	New	Elective	Spring, odd yrs	LA 100	ABC210

*- recommended language includes: *Offered each semester; Offered each fall [spring]; Offered each year; Offered odd [even] years, fall [spring] semester; Offered occasionally**.*

** - Courses “Offered occasionally” are assumed to be taught at least once during a student’s enrollment at Beloit College. Courses taught less frequently than every four years should be reconsidered as topics courses. If retained in the catalog, courses only rarely taught should not have a frequency description.

Appendix C: Course Teaching Rotation [REQUIRED] – This table summarizes the rotation of courses over the current and at least the next four academic years. The purpose of this table is to show that (1) courses are offered with sufficient frequency for students to complete the major/minor; (2) courses included in the catalog are taught on a predictable basis; and (3) the department is making reasonable

contributions to FYI and other all college requirements. Below is a suggested organization for the Teaching Rotation table.

Dept	No.	Course Name	Fall 2011	Spr 2012	Fall 2012	Spr 2013	Fall 2013	Spr 2014	Fall 2014	Spr 2015	Fall 2015	Spr 2016
INIT	100	FYI	smith		jones		brown		miller		smith	
LA	100	Surveying the Liberal Arts	smith	jones	smith	smith	sab	jones	smith	jones	jones	jones
	100	Surveying the Liberal Arts	brown		miller		brown		miller		brown	
LA	201	Doing the Liberal Arts			smith				smith			

Issues that occasionally arise with regard to the supporting appendices include:

- Do the courses added, deleted, or changed in Appendix A correspond with those listed in the *Proposed Changes* section of the proposal text?
- Does the Revised Catalog information in Appendix A (or individual Course Change forms) correspond with what is provided in Appendix B?
- For existing courses that are not changed, do the course prefix, number, title, domain, frequency taught, and prerequisites listed in the current course catalog correspond with what is indicated in Appendix B? Do all regular course offerings include a description of when they are taught?
- For each course, does the Frequency Taught as listed in Appendix A (or individual Course Change forms) and B correspond with what is indicated in Appendix C?
- In Appendix C, does the department indicate a reasonable frequency and rotation for FYI (INIT 100)?
- Are anticipated sabbaticals included in the projected course rotation and/or explained in the *Feasibility* section of the document?