

## Creating Best Practices in Curriculum Development

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2010

The College of Liberal Studies established the office of Curriculum Development in July of 2004 to be responsible for the coordination of course development, maintenance, revision, and evaluation. The College adopted a Curriculum Development mission to incorporate the guiding principles for its operation. The Office of Curriculum Development seeks in alignment with the College's overall mission "to co-ordinate people and resources in the creation, enhancement, and maintenance of a continuously improving set of courses that are used to deliver high quality programs and degrees that ultimately transform the non-traditional students through interdisciplinary distance education". Principle centered curricula values were adopted for guiding the design and development of the curriculum.

Rigor – Curriculum that embodies strength, depth, and breadth in the content and learning strategies.

Agility – Curriculum that is pragmatic in multiple ways with a long term view.

Profitability – Curriculum that adds value to all constituents – students, faculty, college and society.

Significance – Curriculum that majors on the major constructs, concepts, ideas and issues in the students' lives.

Inspiration – Curriculum that exploits the tension between passion and reason through human interaction.

The overall goal was to incorporate the mission and values into a process that enabled creation of significant learning experiences through courses and curriculum that represented

more than an aggregation of resources, materials, and content but rather resulted in a product of intentional design. Under the philosophy of the College, significant learning experiences are those that provide learning activities with a high level of energetic engagement, with outcomes of significant lasting change and value in the lives of our students (Fink, 2003, p. 7). To accomplish these goals we needed a development process for the creation of courses in a repeatable and structured environment while leaving the flexibility to innovate within that structure.

The Curriculum Development Process is a cyclical process designed for easy entry at any point while maintaining control for effective and efficient development and implementation. The process provides continuous improvement through multiple opportunities of independent review and evaluation from internal and external sources. The approval process includes the Dean and Associate Dean of the college and the Undergraduate and Graduate Program Coordinators (title?). In addition the College of Liberal Studies Executive committee through the Faculty Fellows and its Curriculum Committee provide review and input, and the sub-committee for Curriculum Review provides a formal course level review process. University level evaluations take place through CLS's participation in the university curriculum approval processes and reviews at levels up to the Higher Education Board of Regents for the State of Oklahoma in some cases.

This process has resulted in curriculum that is effective in quality control and improvement and efficient in production cost. The courses themselves are easily maintained, revised, or converted with class management incorporated into the standardized syllabus and content framework provided to subject matter experts. The use of standardized frameworks for design and development assures the courses are consistent in navigation and overall design,

enabling students to focus on their learning rather than on the mechanics of the technology and navigation. Flexibility and creativity are maintained by allowing faculty to change up to 25% of the course through the Desire 2 Learn learning management system. The reiterative portion of the process encourages an active learning orientation and consistency in workloads with few constraints on faculty creativity or scholarship. The majority of the content is delivered on web pages, thus it is not dependent upon a particular learning management system, it is easily accessible by a variety of browsers, and operating systems. Deliver in this manner the content requires a minimum of administrative and faculty overhead. The basic content of a course can be delivered online, by CD-ROM, as a hybrid or face to face with a minimum conversion effort. The CLS development process ensures low vulnerability – program emphasis can be redirected easily and quickly, scheduling can be as simple or as sophisticated as desired. It also provides high scalability – multiple sections, multiple instructional approaches and finally the curriculum can be customized and delivered under extraordinary circumstances in alignment with the major reason for the college's existence – student accessibility.