June 4, 2009

Curriculum Committee
School of Natural Sciences
Policies and Procedures (Approved Aug. 21, 2009)

The Natural Science Curriculum Committee (NSCC) serves as the faculty Senate body that reviews, approves, and makes recommendations to the Division Academic Senate Undergraduate Council (UGC) on all matters related to undergraduate curriculum within the School of Natural Sciences (SNS). The NSCC also advises the School Dean on matters related to curriculum and associated policies and procedures.

I. Duties

- Reviews, coordinates, and takes final action on all matters relating to courses of instruction within the School of Natural Sciences, including approval of new undergraduate courses and modification, withdrawal, conduct, credit valuation, and classification of existing courses.
- Reviews and recommends for approval proposals within the School for undergraduate majors, minors and certificates.
- Consults with and advises members of the School on courses of instruction.
- Considers and reports upon matters involving questions of educational policy, degree program requirements, and enrollment within the School.
- Determines criteria for, and recommends for approval, award of undergraduate honors and Honors with the Bachelor's Degree within the School.

II. Membership

- Members of the NSCC are comprised of the faculty serving as the program leads for the undergraduate major degree programs in SNS. Program leads are selected by the faculty group that supports the undergraduate degree program and are approved by the SNS Committee on Committees, Executive Committee, and the Dean.

- Members serve one-year, renewable terms beginning on the first day of instruction of the Fall semester.

- The chair of the NSCC is elected by the committee members.

III. Approval of Courses

The NSCC is responsible for approval of new courses and modification, withdrawal, conduct, credit valuation, and classification of existing courses within SNS. Approvals at the school level are subject to final approval by UGC. Current guidelines from UGC should be followed. The procedure for course approval for a new course, or for modification of an existing course, is as follows:

1. All new courses or modifications to existing courses must be submitted electronically using the approved course request form (CRF) (http://crf.ucmerced.edu).

2. The course instructor (or instructors) is responsible for the content of the course request form

(CRF). The instructor should consult with their degree program lead and with instructors of other courses that may be affected by any proposed changes to existing courses in developing or changing a CRF. Instructors and program leads should insure that new courses do not overlap substantially in content with existing courses. Instructors should consult with the Dean's office prior to CRF submission regarding resource needs associated with the course. The program lead is responsible for insuring that new courses and modifications to existing courses are approved by faculty supporting the major, and that the content of the CRF is consistent with that of approved courses.

3. The instructor must complete all sections of the CRF. New courses must include a course syllabus prepared according to current UGC guidelines. Modifications to existing courses must specify all of the proposed changes to the course and provide an explanation of proposed changes. Resource needs anticipated for the course should be specified. The completed CRF is submitted electronically by the instructor.

4. The NSCC is responsible for reviewing and approving the CRF. The faculty lead on NSCC may consult with the instructor or other faculty to address any questions regarding the CRF that may arise. The CRF may be sent back to the instructor for modification prior to being submitted for a vote.

5. The NSCC votes electronically on the CRF, which is approved by a simple majority.

6. After approval by NSCC, the CRF is transmitted to the Dean's office for review and approval regarding resources.

7. Approved courses are transmitted by the Dean's office to the Registrar's office. Any comments by NSCC or the Dean's office are transmitted electronically with the CRF. The Registrar's office reviews the CRF and transmits it to UGC for final approval. After a CRF is approved, the SNS is notified by UGC and the Registrar.

8. Returned CRFs: If an approved CRF has been returned from the Dean's office, Registrar, or UGC for minor adjustments or clarification, the CRF will be returned to the initiating instructor for editing. When the edited CRF has been re-submitted for NSCC approval, the NSCC chair will consult with the faculty lead for the CRF and determine (a) whether the changes made were consistent with the request for changes and sufficiently address the concerns raised, and (b) whether the changes to the CRF are minor or clarifying (i.e., no substantial changes to course content, mode of delivery, or resource implications). If the NSCC chair and faculty lead agree on (a) and (b), the course will be re-approved. If the changes made are deemed to be major or raise other substantial issues, then the CRF will be reviewed and voted on again by NSCC. Any re-voted CRFs will be sent to the Dean's office for re-review.

IV. Approval of New Degree Programs and Revisions to Existing Programs

The NSCC is responsible for approval of new degree programs (major and minor degrees) and for approving modifications, consolidation, or termination of existing degree programs within

SNS. Approvals at the school level are subject to final approval by UGC. The NSCC may determine whether changes to existing degree programs are major or minor.

A. Major Changes to Degree Programs

1. All proposals for new degree programs or substantive changes to existing programs should follow the current guidelines specified by UGC and Administration policies and procedures. Faculty are responsible for developing proposals, in consultation with the Dean.

2. Major changes include, but are not limited to:

- Creation of a new major degree program or a new minor degree program.
- Consolidation of one or more major or minor degree programs.
- Termination of a major or minor degree program.
- New modalities of degree delivery.
- Use of new off-campus sites for delivery of a degree program.
- Change in duration of a degree program.

3. Major or substantive changes to degree programs require a SNS-wide faculty discussion and vote.

4. A memo from the SNS faculty reporting the vote of the faculty and any faculty discussion pertinent to the proposal should be included with the proposal to UGC. The Dean submits the proposal to the Academic Senate with his/her endorsement.

B. Minor Changes to Degree Programs

1. Minor or non-substantive changes to degree programs should include a memo specifying proposed changes and a justification for them, and revised catalog copy indicating the changes. The memo should specify whether the proposed change would have an impact on other degree programs.

2. Minor or non-substantive changes include, but are not limited to:

- Changes to course requirements within an existing degree program.
- Addition or deletion of a new emphasis track to an existing major, or modifications to existing emphasis tracks.
- Descriptive catalog changes for existing degree programs.

3. Minor or non-substantive changes are approved by a NSCC vote.

4. Proposals for minor changes are reviewed by the Dean's office for resource implications. Approval by NSCC and the Dean's office, and any comments or faculty discussion, are transmitted by SNS to UGC for final approval.

V. Changes to School-wide Requirements

The NSCC is responsible for approval of, or changes to, requirements associated with all undergraduate degree programs (majors and minors) in SNS. Approvals at the school level are subject to final approval by UGC. The NSCC may determine whether changes to requirements are major or minor.

1. Major changes include, but are not limited to:

- Any *significant* changes to the SNS-wide degree requirements (e.g., adding or deleting a specific course requirement.)
- Changes in unit requirements for graduation.
- Changes in grade-point average minimums or restrictions for graduation.

Major or substantive changes to requirements require a SNS-wide faculty discussion and vote.

2. Minor or non-substantive changes include, but are not limited to:

- Minor changes to SNS-wide degree requirements (e.g., extending the range of acceptable courses that fulfill a requirement.)
- Descriptive catalog changes associated with SNS requirements.

Minor or non-substantive changes are approved by a NSCC vote.

VI. Voting Procedures

1. Voting may be held by written or secure electronic ballot.

2. Proposed actions, including a summary of discussion and any appropriate background material, must be distributed to all voting members.

3. Voting members have at least three days of instruction in which to cast their vote.

4. Approval requires a majority of votes cast, not counting abstentions.

5. NSCC will report the outcome of voting to all voting members.