Strange Bedfellows

The Registrar's Office and University Policy and Curriculum Committees

Dr. Nicole Rovig, University Registrar

Doug McKenna, MA, Associate Registrar for Certification Services

Session ID: 1207

Overview

- Introduction to Michigan State University
- Academic Governance at Michigan State
  - Introduction to relevant committees
- University Curriculum and Catalog
  - Housed in the Office of the Registrar
  - Path of curricular requests
- The Changing Role of the Registrar
- Working with the Committees
  - 4 quick examples
- Take Aways
- Questions and Answers

Michigan State University

- Nation's pioneer Land Grant institution

- Located in East Lansing, MI

- 47,278 students (35,871 undergrads)

- 17 Colleges
  - 3 Medical Schools
  - MSU College of Law

- 6,800 degrees awarded in Spring 2009

- 6,300 unique courses active in Spring 2010

Conceptual Framework

Curricular and academic policy changes:

- Occur via <u>University-level</u> academic governance
- Are guided by faculty input (faculty are responsible for the content of the curriculum)
- Require efficient implementation for institutional effectiveness

Office of the Registrar is an academic support unit:

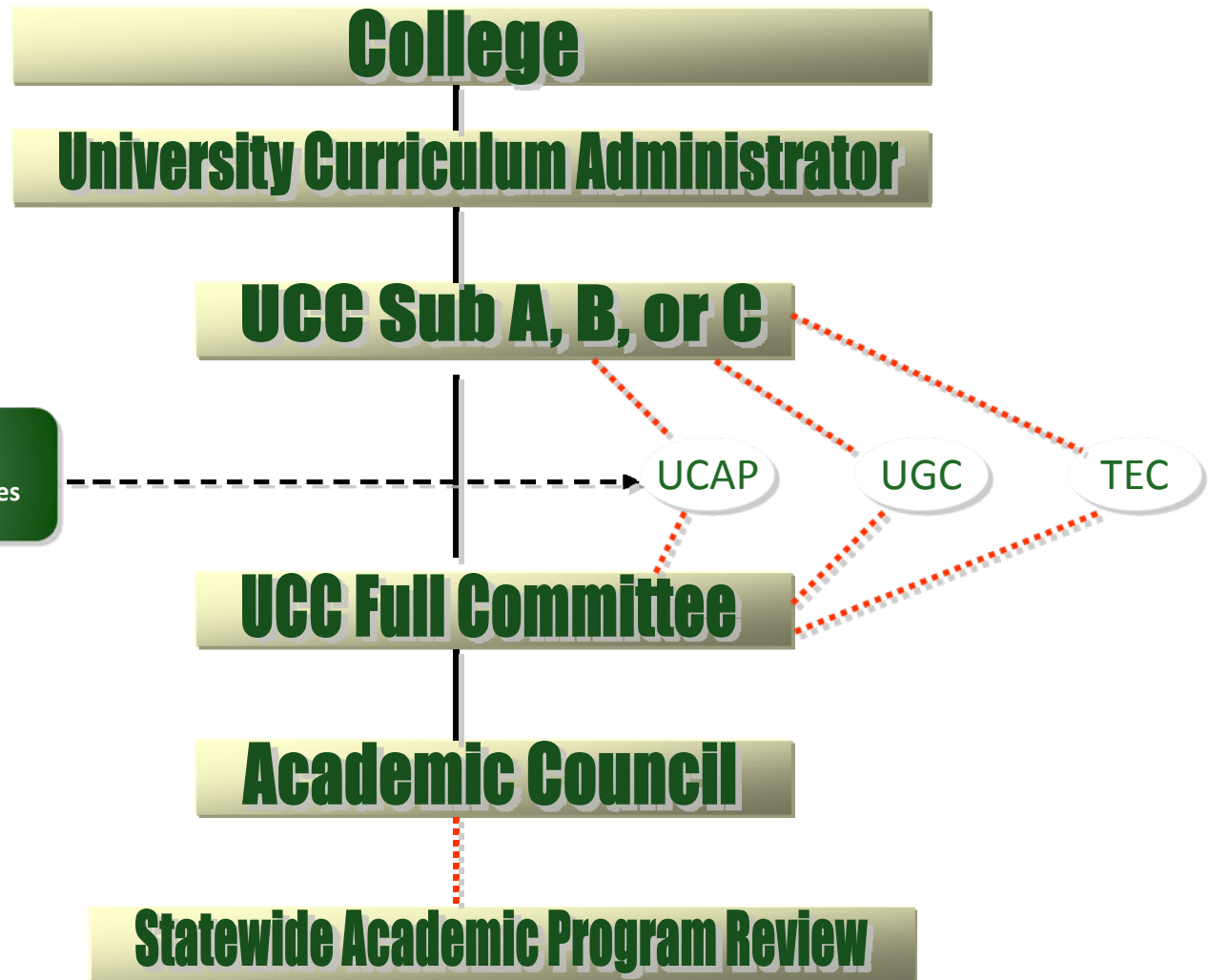- Staff understand how to implement curricular and policy change

MSU Registrar's Office
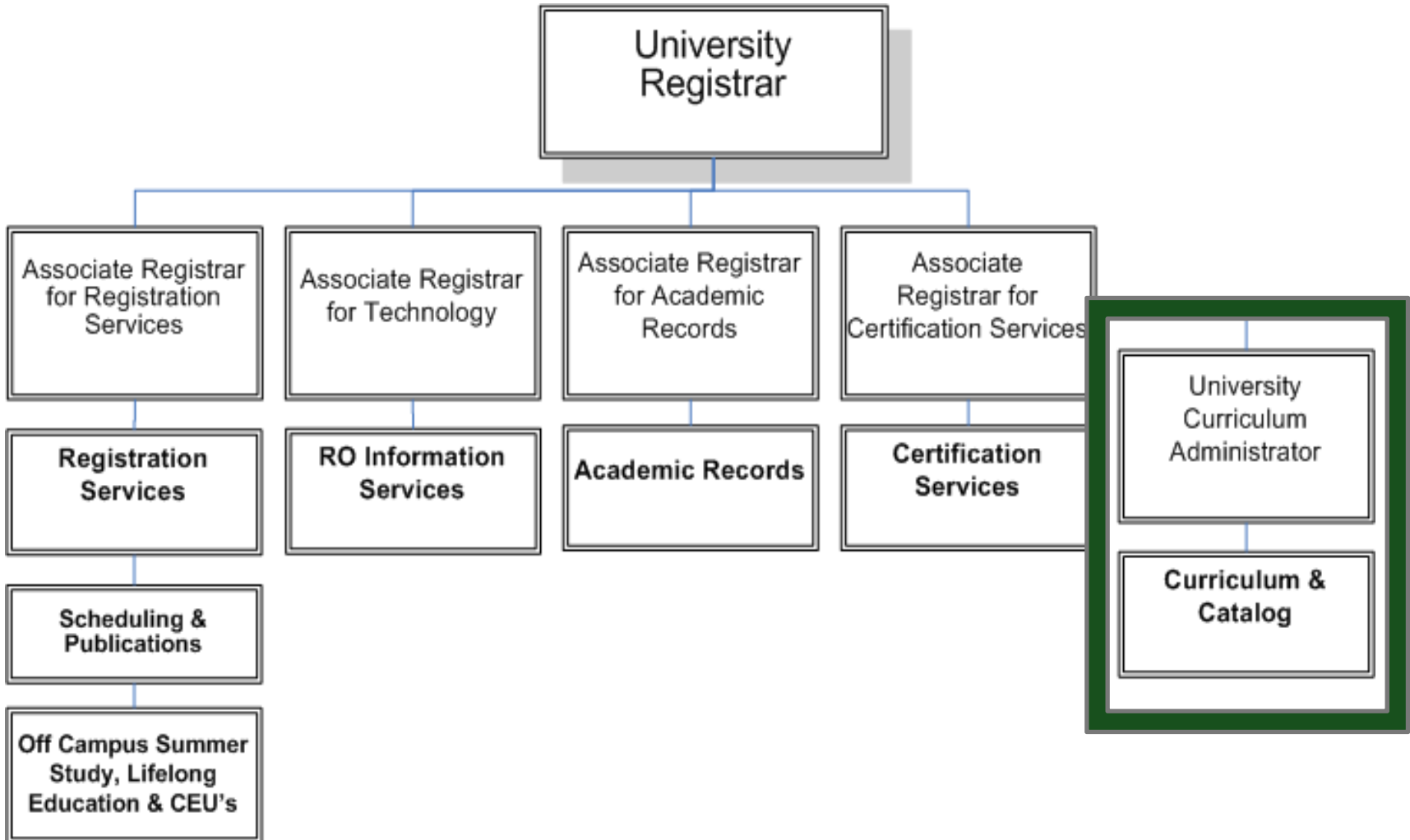
Path of Curricular Requests

Academic Governance

Standing Committees established by University Bylaws

- University Committee on Academic Policy (UCAP)

- University Committee on Curriculum (UCC)

- University Graduate Council (UGC)

Taken from Bylaws for Academic Governance -
https://www.msu.edu/unit/acadgov/bylaws/section4/index.html

Academic Governance

Coordination Among Committees

- **UCAP**: 4.4.8. The Committee on Academic Policy shall coordinate its activities with those of the Committee on Curriculum, the Graduate Council, and other appropriate Academic Council Standing Committees.

- **UCC**: 4.5.5. The Committee on Curriculum shall coordinate its activities with those of the Committee on Academic Policy, the Graduate Council, and other appropriate Academic Council Standing Committees.

- **UGC**: 4.6.6. The University Graduate Council shall coordinate its activities with those of the Committee on Academic Policy, the Committee on Curriculum, and other appropriate Academic Council Standing Committees.

Taken from Bylaws for Academic Governance -
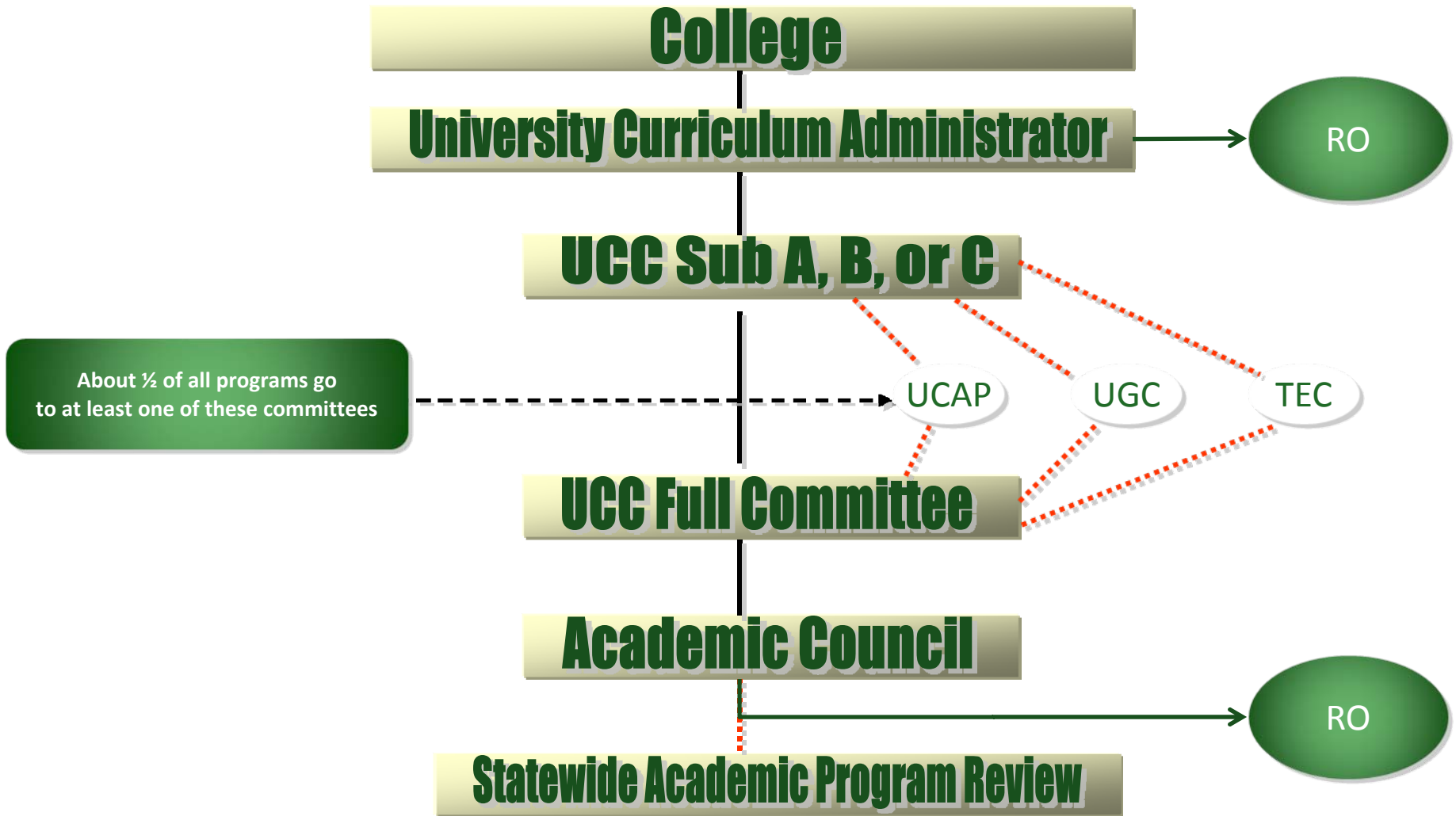   https://www.msu.edu/unit/acadgov/bylaws/section4/index.html

University Curriculum and Catalog

- Became part of the Office of the Registrar July 1, 2000
  - Provost's executive decision
  - Quick change
- Improves the link between curricular and academic policy change and its implementation
- The Registrar's Office:
  - is the steward of academic data;
  - knows from requests it receives for exceptions, if curricular program requirements and related academic policies work;
  - serves as a resource for academic governance committees and university administrators who need data to inform curricular proposals and new or changed policies.
- Alignment of curricular approval process with enrollment periods and degree certification

Path of Curricular Requests

College

University Curriculum Administrator → RO

UCC Sub A, B, or C

About ½ of all programs go to at least one of these committees

UCAP   UGC   TEC

UCC Full Committee

Academic Council → RO

Statewide Academic Program Review

Changing Role of the Registrar

- RO is traditionally a "policy enforcing" office
- Technology puts enormous amounts of information into reach
  - Students / Courses / Programs / Room scheduling
  - Requirement fulfillment
- Intimately acquainted with institutional data
- Uniquely positioned to observe trends in curriculum and academic policy
- Now has a responsibility to provide advice on these trends

Changing Roles

- Continuing evolution in job functions
  - Asked for and received a place in the curriculum process
- Changes how the office works
  - What types of work are performed
  - Functionally
- Requires a changing skill set for Registrars and Associate Registrars
  - Data analysis
  - Writing, Editing
  - High-level critical thinking
  - Ability to synthesize information

Working With the Committees

- Four examples of how the Registrar's Office took a lead role and engaged with various University committees:
  - Graduation Honors
  - "Comprehensive" Proposals
  - Moratorium/Discontinuance
  - University Repeat Policy

Graduation Honors

- Spring 2006: The RO discovered that policy and practice were out of sync regarding the awarding of graduation honors

- Awarding graduation honors in higher percentages than stipulated by policy
- The RO gathered data from the previous 10 years of graduates

Graduation Honors - Findings

- The ten-year trend showed an increase in cumulative GPA of graduates

- Policy stipulated that 6% receive "With High Honor" and the next 14% receive "With Honor" (20% of graduates total)

- *Academic Programs* catalog indicated what the "target" GPAs for assigning honors were, but had not been updated in several years

Graduation Honors - Policy Revision

- Engaged with curriculum and policy committees to revise *Academic Programs* catalog

- The percentages of graduation honors were reaffirmed at 6% and 14% (20% total)

- Determining the GPA thresholds necessary to meet those percentages is handled by the RO

- New GPA thresholds were implemented in stages over a three-year period

Working With the Committees

- Four examples of how the Registrar's Office took a lead role and engaged with various University committees:
  - Graduation Honors
  - "Comprehensive" Proposal
  - Moratorium/Discontinuance
  - University Repeat Policy

Comprehensive Proposal

- A series of seemingly unrelated topics came under discussion over an academic year

- Became increasingly obvious that the curriculum committee couldn't address the topics independently of each other

- UCC requested information and analysis to review, act, and send forward for additional governance review

Comprehensive Proposal

- When one aspect of the curricular structure is changed it affects other aspects of the curriculum
  - Institutional mission affects where, how, and when academic programs are delivered
  - Faculty are responsible for curricular content and have opportunities to provide input on policy
  - Individual components of degree programs need to relate clearly to one another for students to understand requirements and track progress
  - There is a relationship between undergraduate and graduate-level programs

Comprehensive Proposal

- Benchmarking best practices with peer and other institutions is important to enhance program competitiveness, inter-institutional agreements, and credit transfer

- Questions, concerns, and suggestions from MSU faculty and academic units, as offered by their representatives to academic governance, need to inform policy and taxonomic changes
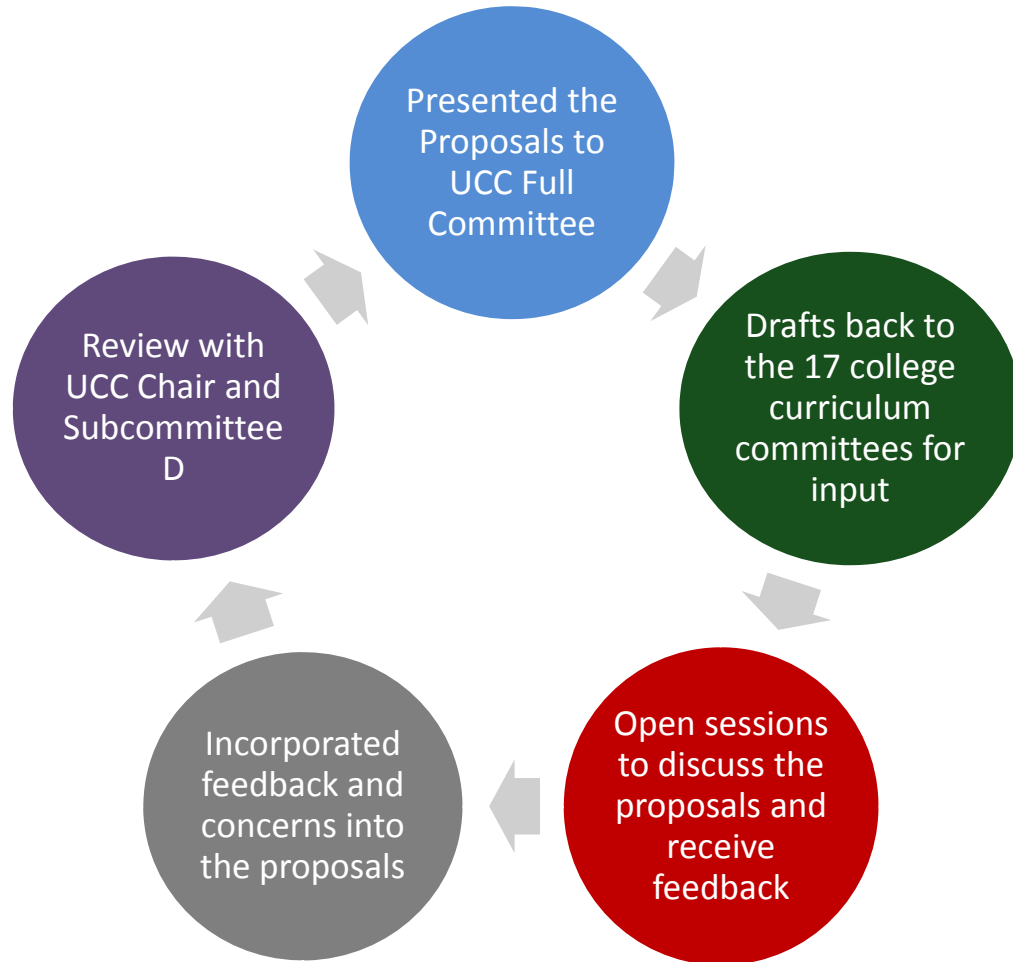
The Process

- The RO worked with the Provost's Office and UCC to generate a draft set of proposals
  - A rationale for each
  - Background information
  - Supporting documentation
  - How it related to established policy and/or other proposals

The Process – The Flow

Presented the Proposals to UCC Full Committee

Drafts back to the 17 college curriculum committees for input

Open sessions to discuss the proposals and receive feedback

Incorporated feedback and concerns into the proposals

Review with UCC Chair and Subcommittee D

The Process (cont.)

- UCAP and UGC reviewed and took action on all of the proposals
  - Some finer points were tweaked in committee
- Once approved, the University Curriculum Administrator updated *Academic Programs* catalog and the Associate Provost sent notification to the campus about the changes

Working With the Committees

- Four examples of how the Registrar's Office took a lead role and engaged with various University committees:
  - Graduation Honors
  - "Comprehensive" Proposal
  - **Moratorium/Discontinuance**
  - University Repeat Policy

Moratorium / Discontinuance

- A decrease in state funding has resulted in significant budget reductions to all academic units
- This effort is being managed by the President and Provost with information shared to the campus in a variety of ways
  - http://shapingthefuture.msu.edu
- Provost directed a review of all programs
  - Met with the Deans of each college
  - The Deans generated a list of 44 programs subject to moratorium and/or discontinuance
  - Needed to clarify the Provost's role in the governance process

The Process

- The RO worked with the Provost's Office and UCC to revise the flow of the curricular process
  - Reviewed the bylaws for guidance
  - Updated the curriculum web pages and systems to accommodate the Provost's review
  - Revised the language on the informational memos that accompany each request
  - Provided data
  - Provided support and recommendations to academic units on how to process the forms

Working With the Committees

- Four examples of how the Registrar's Office took a lead role and engaged with various University committees:
  - Graduation Honors
  - "Comprehensive" Proposal
  - Moratorium/Discontinuance
 - University Repeat Policy

IV

University Repeat Policy

- MSU has a fairly liberal course repeat policy
- Students who receive a grade below 2.0 may repeat the course
  - Students can repeat up to 20 credits
  - The last grade taken is included in the GPA
  - All attempts appear on the transcript
- There have been several subcommittees charged with reviewing the policy over the last 10 years
- UCAP has submitted draft revisions to the policy for review

University Repeat Policy (cont.)

- The RO is advising UCAP on implications
  - Student Information System may require recoding to accommodate aspects of the revisions
    - May require central IT resources
  - More students may repeat courses they weren't allowed to previously
    - Increased demand for sections
    - Increased GPAs may influence graduation honors minimum GPA thresholds
  - Proposed wording need to be more specific and clear
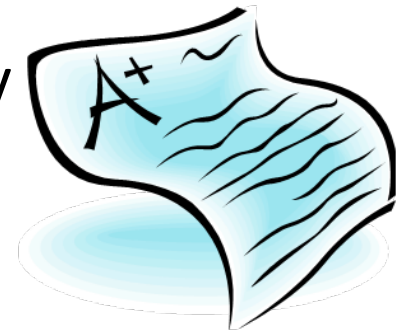
Take Aways

- RO involvement in Curriculum and Policy committees can be mutually beneficial

- Requires the support of the Provost's Office and engagement with the committees

- RO's role is advisory and must defer to the faculty
  - When to be seen and not heard
  - Need to ask "What are you trying to accomplish?" and then suggest ways to reach the goal

Take Aways

- Registrar's Office
  - Staff implicitly ask themselves, "How will colleges and students react?"
  - Staff meet with and invite feedback from directors of student affairs and associate deans
  - Office has enhanced its credibility

- Colleges
  - Know they can ask questions freely
  - Know they can request changes (technological / process / etc.)
  - Provide input and raise issues
  - Know their explanation of the impact on students will be heard

Questions and Answers

What questions do you have at this time?

Dr. Nicole Rovig
University Registrar
rovig@msu.edu

Doug McKenna, MA
Associate Registrar for Certification Services
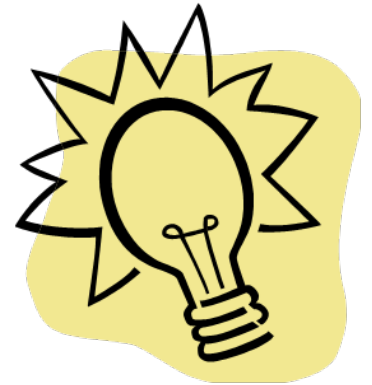mckenn62@msu.edu

Session ID: 1207

URL for This Presentation

This presentation is available online at the Michigan State University Registrar's website:

http://www.reg.msu.edu/aboutus.asp