What Might Raise Questions in APC's Review of a Curriculum Proposal:

Some Common Issues…

At the September 10, 2014 Division Council meeting, several of the division chairs asked if APC could provide information about the kinds of issues that generally cause a curriculum proposal to be sent back to the division.

APC agreed to list some of the most common issues that it has reviewed, discussed, and questioned in the last two years. The list that APC generated is not comprehensive. There have been other individual issues that APC has thoroughly reviewed, discussed, and questioned that were not included in the list of most common issues.

The information provided below is divided into two parts. The first part highlights specific aspects of the Academic Program Council's charge as listed in the Faculty Manual. Part II includes a chart that describes some, but not all, of the most common issues that raise extra scrutiny when APC examines curriculum proposals.

PART I:

"**The Academic Program Council has comprehensive responsibility for the academic program, with specific responsibilities for curriculum, policy development, and general oversight of practices and services affecting the academic program**…**The Council receives proposals from academic divisions, core course planning groups… It also may initiate policy and program proposals. The Council may approve, modify, or reject proposals that it receives; however, on substantive matters, the Council submits conclusions to the College Faculty Assembly as recommendations for adoption."**

http://catalog.berea.edu/en/2013-2014/Faculty-Manual/Campus-Governance/Faculty-Council-and-Committee-Structure/The-Academic-Program-Council-APC

PART 2:

Topic	What to Include	What Will Raise Questions in the Review of the Proposal
1. Sections/Components listed in the Proposal Outline	Address all sections represented in the outline and answer all questions asked. All categories are carefully marked by number and heading.	Failing to address all categories and/or questions. Categories are not marked and the reviewers must search the entire proposal for information requested.

Topic	What to Include	What Will Raise Questions in the Review of the Proposal
2. Length of Proposal and Clarity	Be succinct and to the point, but give enough information so the readers can fully understand what the proposal is about. Make sure that what is being proposed is clear to the reviewers.	Being very lengthy, redundant, difficult to follow, inconsistent, etc. The proposal is written in a way that makes it difficult for the reviewers to fully grasp what exactly is being proposed.
3. Rationale	Provide a thoughtful explanation of the rationale for the changes. The rationale should be grounded in best current practices, related to a learned society, results from a program self-study, program curriculum self-study, and/or assessment, etc. In some cases, the impetus for change is a result of meeting the requirements of licensing or accrediting bodies. Be specific. Provide information about what has led the program it to make the proposed changes.	Failing to provide a rationale OR providing a very limited rationale that is (a) not based on a careful, thoughtful self-study of program outcomes, curriculum, assessments, and needs of students; and/or (b) not related to best current practices or a learned society; and/or (c) based on personal preferences and/or designed for specific faculty, etc. Where applicable, not explaining/describing and not providing the relevant documentation that details the requirements of a licensing or accrediting body
4. Faculty	Show that current faculty can teach the proposed curriculum	Trying to demonstrate that a new faculty member needs to be hired to teach the proposed curriculum
5. GSTR staffing commitment	Clearly indicate the past, current, and future commitment to GSTR course staffing and demonstrate that the program is still committed to staffing GSTR courses	Failing to show past, current, and future commitment to GSTR course staffing and/or showing a decrease in the program's commitment to staffing GSTR courses as a result of the proposed curriculum
6. Changes in Admission to the Major	Indicate why the changes are needed, how it would improve students' success, and how these changes still adhere to Berea's Great Commitments	The appearance of exclusion of specific groups of students and/or the appearance of only wanting to admit certain groups of students. The appearance of not adhering to Berea's Great Commitments.

Topic	What to Include	What Will Raise Questions in the Review of the Proposal
7. Students	Indicate how the changes will benefit students and their learning and future success and show how the program can help students meet the new requirements	Not considering the impact of the changes on students. The impact on students' learning and success appears to be detrimental rather than positive. The appearance that all the burden for change falls on the students or is at the students' expense. The changes may greatly reduce the number of students eligible to be majors.
8. Consulting with Programs Impacted by the Proposed Curriculum Changes	If the proposal will impact another program or programs, include a written statement from the program accepting and approving of the specific changes.	Failing to gain written approval from other program or programs that might be impacted by the proposal or including a written approval for a change but the specific changes being approved are not specified.
9. Number of courses being offered by the program	If new course or courses are being proposed, indicate which courses are being deleted. If none are being deleted, a thoughtful explanation should be given as to why the programs needs all the courses being proposed as well as the ones currently in the catalog. Indicate how all of these courses can be taught in a timely manner and that there are current faculty to teach them all.	The appearance of an increase or proliferation of courses which could result in having many courses in the catalog which are seldom if ever taught. The appearance that more course choices means that there will be fewer students enrolled in specific courses and/or not enough students will enroll, which means more courses will be cancelled.
10. Learning Outcomes and their Assessment	List learning outcomes and well-thought out assessments for new or revised courses AND for new or revised majors/minors	Learning outcomes and their assessment are both missing or are not thoroughly stated or are not rigorous OR no assessment plan is given.

Topic	What to Include	What Will Raise Questions in the Review of the Proposal
11. Prerequisites	The revised or new 300 and 400 level courses have prerequisites that reflect the knowledge and skills student should bring to these upper level courses	Failure to have prerequisites for upper level courses or having minimal prerequisites that do not reflect the knowledge and skills students should bring to the proposed/revised upper level courses.
12. Required Courses/ Distribution Lists/Concentrations, etc.	The choices are structured in such a way that students have to take a significant number of courses at the 300 and 400 levels.	The choices are structured so that a student can take almost all of the courses for a major or minor at the 100 and 200 levels. That is, the major/minor requires very few, if any, 300 or 400 level courses.
13. Need	Indicate why there is a need for these changes AND that there are sufficient number of students for this course and/or this major/minor	Failing to show that there is a need for this course or for this major/minor. Failing to show that there is a demand for this course/major/minor and failing to show that there is a student population to support this course/major/minor.
14. Readability, Grammar, and Proofreading	Make sure that the proposal is readable, that it is free of grammatical errors, and that it has gone through rigorous and numerous readings by multiple people.	Failing to carefully proofread and as a result the proposal has numerous grammatical errors, etc.
15. Communication with others who are interested and/or who wish to be informed.	Make sure that everyone in the program and division and related programs/divisions are aware of the proposed changes. The more aware faculty are the more open the dialogue will be when the full faculty votes on the proposal.	Failing to keep others informed of what is being proposed. When other faculty are unaware of changes, more questions will be asked and more challenges will be made when the proposal comes before the full faculty for a vote.
16. Others		