Business Process for Review of American Cultures Courses

BACKGROUND

Established in 1989, the American Cultures (AC) Breadth Requirement is a result of an identified campus need for courses that focus on the diversity of racial and ethnic groups that shape the identity of United States history and society. In 1991 the first AC courses were offered on campus and were defined, as outlined in Berkley Division Regulation 300, by being integrative and comparative and addressing theoretical and analytical issues relevant to understanding race, culture, and ethnicity. Since inception, via a course review process housed within the Academic Senate, hundreds of courses have been approved to meet the AC requirement. As of 2016 over 40 departments offer at least one AC course. Additionally, dozens of courses have been, and continue to be, approved for non UC Berkeley colleges. Done initially to help fill the gap the campus experienced between requirement implementation and course availability, non-UC Berkeley AC courses now serve as another way Berkeley and transfer students are able to meet this requirement. Part of the success in the growth and diffusion of AC courses is grounded in the American Cultures Center. The AC Center serves as a hub for curriculum development and campus programming that supports the critical engagement of ethnic, racial, and cultural studies.

PURPOSE

The American Cultures Subcommittee (AMCULT) is a subcommittee of the Committee on Courses and Instruction. AMCULT is bound by Berkeley Division Regulation 300 and By-laws 10, 11, 12, and 33, which define the charge and composition of the Subcommittee. Additionally the Berkeley Divisional Council has endorsed "Guidelines for Approving Courses to Fulfill the Breadth Requirement in American Cultures" which define the review scope of the Subcommittee. The information below chronologically illustrates the current business process by which the Subcommittee fulfills these regulations, bylaws, and guidelines.

AC NEW COURSE REVIEW AND APPROVAL PROCESS

1. *Academic Units (Department Course Contacts, Faculty)*
   For new course proposals: prepare course proposals and syllabi, and submit them in the Course Management System (CMS). Frequently instructors will work with the American Cultures Center to develop or refine a syllabus. While this can help the syllabus development process, it is not a requirement of the Senate.

2. *Academic Units (Department Chairs, Department Reviewers)*
   Review and approve proposals in CMS.

3. *Academic Senate Staff*
   Prepare the course materials and do a preliminary review, contacting academic units when necessary to request more information or fix problems. Proposals are reviewed for consistency, completeness, correctness, and style.

4. *AMCULT Subcommittee*
   Prior to Friday meetings, subcommittee members review course proposals as provided in the agenda packet. Agenda packets are distributed three business days prior to the meeting. At the meeting, members discuss proposals and decide whether to recommend approval, pend for more information, or deny the course.

   If the decision is to approve the course proposal it moves along to the subsequent steps. If the decision is to pend or deny the proposal is held at this point and feedback is provided to the submitter.

5. *COCI Subcommittees*
   New course proposals recommended by AMCULT for approval undergo a secondary review by the discipline appropriate Committee on Courses of Instruction (COCI) Subcommittee (Humanities, Sciences, Social Sciences). Review is for consistency and cohesion with broader course review procedures and policies.

6. *COCI*
   Subcommittees present a brief description of the courses they have reviewed and the recommended action. The AMCULT Chair attends the COCI meetings as an *ex officio* voting member and will provide comment and subcommittee rationale as needed if COCI has questions about the course proposal. If there is no discussion, a motion is made to approve the courses, the motion is seconded, and members vote to approve the courses. COCI has final approval authority for new course proposals.

7. *Academic Senate Staff*
   Approve the courses in CMS. Post updated information to the Academic Senate's website about the new course approval.

The flow chart below depicts the steps outlined immediately above:

| Academic unit develops and submits a course to the Academic Senate. | → | AMCULT reviews course and makes recommendation. Approvals move forward. Pends are returned with feedback. | → | COCI reviews AMCULT recommendation and makes final decision. |
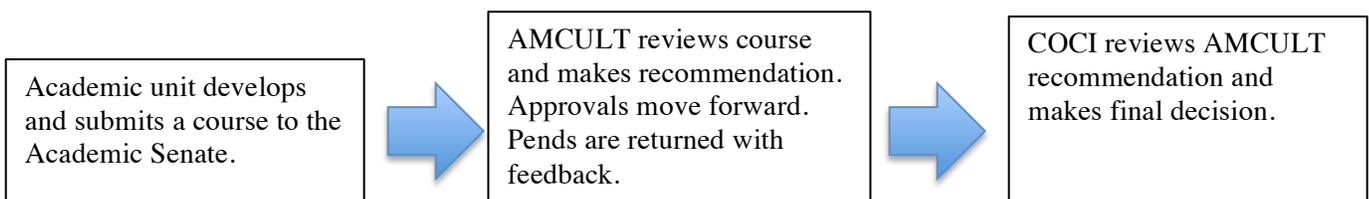
AC INSTRUCTOR AND/OR SYLLABUS CHANGE

1. *Academic Units (Faculty/Department Staff)*
   Any changes in instructor or substantial changes to in an approved syllabus must be reviewed and approved by the American Cultures Subcommittee prior to instructional implementation.

   There are some changes to an approved AC course that do require submission via CMS due to the nature of the change. The chart below delineates what changes must be submitted via

CMS. All other changes may be submitted to the Academic Senate either via campus mail or email. Emails should be directed to sumali@berkley.edu.

Change	Pathway
Course was previously approved, but has new instructor.	Submit cover letter and syllabus directly to Academic Senate outside of CMS. Reviewed **only by** AMCULT
Course was previously approved, has same instructor, but syllabus content is updated.	Submit cover letter and syllabus directly to Academic Senate outside of CMS. Reviewed **only by** AMCULT
Change in course component: • Course number • Course title • Unit value • Grading status • Final exam • Instructional format • Course requisites (pre-, co-, anti-) • Course restrictions • Repeatability	Submit course proposal modification in CMS. Attach an updated syllabus if course content is substantially changed. If syllabus has been updated, reviewed by AMCULT **and then** by COCI. If syllabus has not been updated, reviewed by COCI.

2. *Academic Senate Staff*
   Assemble the proposal materials and do a preliminary review, contacting academic units when necessary to request more information or fix problems. Proposals are reviewed for consistency, completeness, correctness, and style.

3. *AMCULT Subcommittee*
   Prior to Friday meetings, subcommittee members review course proposals as provided in the agenda packet. Agenda packets are distributed three business days prior to the meeting. At the meeting, members discuss proposals and decide whether to recommend approval, pend for more information, or deny the course.

4. *Academic Senate Staff*
   Regardless of the outcome, a feedback letter is provided to the instructor regarding the proposal status. If an instructor change is approved information is updated on the Academic Senate's website to include the new instructor. If a course change is approved where the instructor has already been approved no change is posted. If the decision is to pend or deny appropriate feedback is provided.

The flow chart below depicts the steps outlined immediately above:

| Academic unit updates syllabus and/or changes instructor. | ➡ | AMCULT reviews course and takes final action on changes that only alter the AC content of the course or change the instructor. Pends are returned with feedback. | ➡ | COCI only reviews after AMCULT if changes include alterations to non-AC components and makes final decision. |
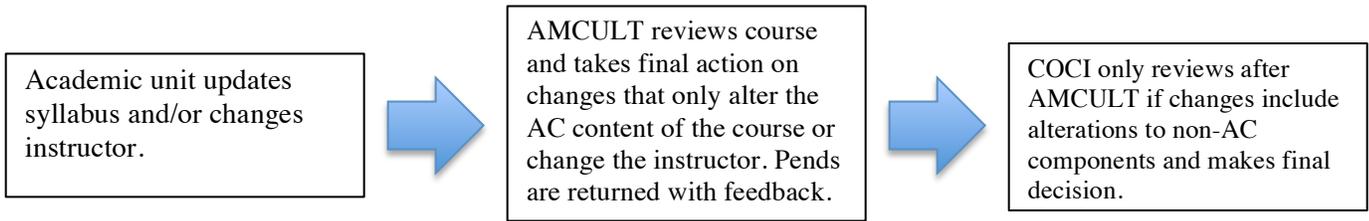
NOTE: As a subcommittee of COCI, AMCULT is charged with reviewing new course proposals and modifications to previously approved courses for AC content. The authority to approve a new course resides with COCI. The authority to approve modifications to the AC content of an approved course resides with AMCULT, as long as the other aspects of the course are not changed.

AC STUDENT PETITION REVIEW AND APPROVAL PROCESS

1. Student
  Students complete the Student Petition to Substitute a Course for "AC" Credit form. Attached to the completed form the student must include a cover letter that explains how the course fulfills the AC requirement and a copy of the syllabus from the semester the student completed the course. The syllabus must include: a detailed course description, detailed lecture and discussion topics, a complete list and description of required assignments, and a course reading list. The student submits the form and attachments to the Academic Senate by the Friday before AMCULT meeting.

2. Academic Senate Staff
  Assemble the petition materials and do a preliminary review. If any of the petition components are missing it is considered incomplete and returned to the student. Petitions are reviewed for completeness.

3. AMCULT Subcommittee
  Prior to Friday meetings, subcommittee members review student petitions as provided in the agenda packet. Agenda packets are distributed three business days prior to the meeting. At the meeting, members discuss the petition(s) and decide whether to recommend approval, pend for more information, or deny the student petition. Approval of the petition would allow all other students who took the course in the same semester to receive AC credit for it without further review by AMCULT. In such instances a petition would still need to be submitted directly to the COCI Variances Subcommittee.

4. Academic Senate Staff
  Regardless of the outcome, a feedback letter is provided to the student regarding the decision. If the student petition is approved the student is notified that final approval is contingent on COCI review and the petition moves to the subsequent steps. If the decision is to pend or deny the appropriate feedback is provided.

5. *COCI Variances Subcommittee*

   If the student petition is recommended for approval it is forwarded to the COCI Variances Subcommittee for review. Although the subcommittee rarely disagrees with AMCULT's recommendation, COCI does reserve the right to do so. If COCI Variances concurs with AMCULT, they will recommend the student petition for approval to the full COCI committee.

   If COCI Variances does not concur with AMCULT's recommendation, feedback will be provided to AMCULT to determine where the two review bodies differ.

6. *COCI*

   COCI Variances will present a brief description of the student petition and the recommended action at the following COCI meeting. The AMCULT Chair attends the COCI meetings as an *ex officio* voting member and will provide comment and subcommittee rationale as needed if COCI has questions about the student petition. If there is no discussion, a motion is made to approve the student petition with other presented variances, the motion is seconded, and members vote to approve the variances. COCI has final approval authority for all variance requests, including student petitions.

7. *Academic Senate Staff*

   Provide a feedback letter to the student with the final decision on the petition.

The flow chart below depicts the steps outlined immediately above:

| Student submits petition to Academic Senate. | → | AMCULT reviews petition and takes final action on denials. Recommendations for approval move to COCI. | → | COCI reviews AMCULT recommendation and makes final decision. |

Prepared by Sumali Tuchrello January 2017
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