Curriculum Management
and THE ROLE OF THE REGISTRAR
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Wendy Kilgore serves as director of research for AACRAO and has more than 19 years’ experience as a higher education administrator and consultant in the United States and Canada. She brings expertise in recruitment, admissions, financial aid, academic advisement, curriculum support, registration, records management, veterans’ education services, technology, organizational restructuring, student-centric business practice development, policy development, and managing comprehensive collaboration to support enrollment efforts. Prior to joining AACRAO full time in 2009, Kilgore served as state dean of enrollment services for the Colorado Community College system and as director of admissions and registrar for the Pima County Community College District. Her professional and consulting experience spans a wide array of institutions, including large public universities, small private colleges, private faith-based colleges, private for-profit institutions, technical colleges, a large two-year multi-campus community college district, and a state community college system.

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Rebecca Mathern is university registrar at Oregon State University and has been involved in higher education for twenty years. She first learned to collaborate with academic leaders as a student government officer in college. She served previously as dean of students at a small non-profit technical school and as registrar of Portland Community College. Mathern earned her B.A. in political science from the University of Minnesota, where she subsequently earned an interdisciplinary master’s degree in organizational development and human resources. Mathern is pursuing a Ph.D. in public administration and policy from Portland State University. She has enjoyed presenting on a variety of topics for AACRAO, PACRAO and Oregon ACRAO as well as for Ellucian and AACRAO Tech. She has served on program, local arrangement, and nominations and elections committees for PACRAO.

Robert Morley
Robert Morley has served as associate registrar at the University of Southern California for more than 30 years. During this time he has been responsible, at one time or another, for all offices and services in the registrar’s office. Morley has led a number of technology initiatives, including the development of the student information system, electronic transcripts, PDF transcripts, degree progress/audit and curriculum management, among others. He served as the first AACRAO vice president for technology, chair of the SPEEDE committee, and contributing author to the following AACRAO publications: Student Records Management, Academic Record and Transcript Guide, and Professional Development Guidelines for Registrars. Morley earned a B.S. from the University of Southern Il-
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Julia A. Pomerenk serves as university registrar at Washington State University. She earned her B.A. in English from Pacific Lutheran University and her M.A. in English from The Ohio State University. Pomerenk began her career as an admissions counselor at Pacific Lutheran University (PLU) and later returned as university registrar. Most of her career has been at Washington State University, where she served as assistant registrar for nine years and as university registrar for 13 years (and counting). Pomerenk has enjoyed involvement with PACRAO, including serving as PACRAO president for 2011–12, and with AACRAO, including serving as AACRAO nominations and elections chair for 2017–18.
At institutions of higher education in the United States, the role of the registrar in curriculum management varies by institutional culture, size, and shared governance model. As evident from AACRAO’s recent survey on the topic, curriculum action processes vary across institutions—as do the individuals, groups, and offices involved in those processes (see Appendix A: AACRAO 60-Second Survey on Curriculum Management). Some registrars are highly engaged in the process, serving as a voting member of the faculty governance body. Other registrars are the last to know about curricular changes and become responsible for making square pegs fit into round holes. In this model, the registrar sometimes has to say, "I’m sorry, but we are unable to make that particular curricular change" because of XYZ policy, federal regulation, or system limitation. In such situations, students are often the ones who bear the consequences of a disengaged registrar’s office.

Ideally, the registrar is closely involved with the curriculum management process. Among other functions, an engaged role in curriculum management process is one that provides data to support proposed curricular changes; provides feedback on the guidelines for curriculum actions; and provides reasoned and data-driven recommendations in support of or against proposed actions (e.g., mid-year catalog change, course number change, etc.). The registrar also is typically responsible for implementing required curriculum changes in the student information system, catalog, web pages, reporting platform, and degree audit system.

Curriculum management should be both nimble and reasoned: nimble in that associated policies and procedures are not so strict
as to limit the institution’s ability to respond to necessary and needed curricular changes in a timely manner, and reasoned in that checks and balances should be in place to control the number, type, and timing of curriculum changes. This helps ensure the integrity of the degrees and helps maintain the ability to accurately and effectively advise students about degree requirements.

This guide is intended to help registrars understand how to help support reasoned and nimble curriculum management at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Included are recommendations and examples of how to establish and maintain positive working relationships with academics and other stakeholders; how to say “no” as needed; how to manage processes associated with curriculum management; and how to guide the application of technology. Additional content includes successes and challenges relative to curriculum management in the emerging competency-based education environment and accreditation and assessment considerations.

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