Memorandum

To: John Stiller, Chair of the Faculty

From: Rita Reaves, Interim SACSCOC Liaison, IPAR

                Lori Flint, Director, Institutional Planning and Accreditation

                Paul Gemperline, Dean of the Graduate School

Date: September 14, 2016

Subject: Review of ECU Approval Processes for Curricular and Programmatic Changes

We are writing to request the Senate's assistance in review of approval processes for curriculum and programmatic changes currently outlined in the Faculty Manual, Section VI, section VII. As stewards of these shared processes, we offer recommendations to ensure complete review, save faculty and committee time, and most importantly, reduce time to implementation of program improvements that faculty have identified and plan to make.

Need for Review

Last spring, following discussions of timelines for review and approval of recently accepted new program proposals, we began asking if our current approval processes continue to serve us well.   Following current procedures, we informed program proposers that if they began in June 2016 to prepare materials and receive committee approvals as quickly as our current process and committee schedules allow, they could expect to complete all stages of approval in April 2018. Their responses, along with the concurrent review of approval processes by the Curriculog Advisory Team and discussions with Academic Council and colleagues at other UNC institutions led us to offer the following recommendations for consideration.

Recommendations

1. <u>One summer meeting of review committees</u>: All current approval processes come to a halt during May, June, July, and August, causing a backlog for fall meetings. Could we develop a strategy for reviewing proposals during these four months, perhaps with one meeting of UCC, GCC, EPPC, and Graduate Council conducted with volunteer summer membership? This recommendation would increase the frequency while decreasing the duration of meetings during fall and spring semesters and meet the goal of expediting review.

2. <u>Bi-monthly meetings of Graduate Council and EPPC</u>: Could the Graduate Council and EPPC meet biweekly during the academic year instead of monthly if there is business to conduct? This practice at other institutions has expedited new program review with the intent again of increasing frequency but decreasing both duration of meetings and length of time required for institutional review.

3. <u>Delegated authority</u>: Current processes require reporting and approval of UCC and GCC minutes and review of Graduate Council actions to the Faculty Senate, usually adding one or two months from the time of approval by the committees to the chancellor's approval of the resulting

Senate or Graduate Council resolution. Based on our experience, very little value is added and many important action items are significantly delayed by full Faculty Senate review of committee reports. For example, in the four years that the Graduate Council has reported actions to the floor of the Senate, not one question has been raised on any policy or program. While we see significant value in continuing to report these action items to the full Senate, we believe that authority for approval could be delegated to the committees where thorough review takes place. Faculty officers, in consultation with committee chairs, could determine if any issue raised by the committees should be brought to the floor of the Senate for further discussion. However, the committees would have delegated authority to approve routine curricular actions as described below and in Attachment 1: Levels of Authority.

4. <u>Implementation of Levels of Approval:</u>   In current practice, all curricular and programmatic changes are reviewed by Academic Council and the chancellor.   As all ECU committees involved in curriculum and program review consist of both faculty and administrators or their representatives, more efficient levels of approval could be defined as detailed in Attachment 1:

   Level 1—Routine/minor curriculum modification: Authority delegated to UCC and GCC

   Level 2—Major curriculum modification requiring no UNC-GA or SACSCOC review: Authority delegated to EPCC, Graduate Council, and Academic Council

   Level 3—Program modification, development, or discontinuation requiring UNC-GA, BOG, and/or SACSCOC notification: Chancellor approval required

5. <u>Reconsideration of full campus review of both the Request to Plan and Request to Establish new program proposals</u>:   All program proposals on the ECU Academic Program Plan have first been presented in a campus-wide forum, with opportunity for questions and written recommendations concerning inclusion. Given the extensive preparation and review of the request for inclusion proposal, do we need full campus review of both the permission to plan and permission to establish proposals? Attachment 2: Timeline for New Program Development shows the best-case scenario of the two-year approval process currently facing faculty program planners. A strong case can be made for full campus review of the permission to plan with abbreviated review of the request to establish document. Our review processes have not changed since UNC-GA implemented a four-month time limitation between granting permission to plan a new program and submission of the approved request to establish document by the campus. A shortened review of the request to establish proposal would assist faculty planners in meeting this four-month window for submission of the proposal to establish the program, especially with the four-month halt in ECU review during summer. Faculty planners have struggled to meet UNC-GA deadlines given our current review processes.

We would be happy to discuss these recommendations and share additional information that we have gathered.   We look forward to our continued work together to ensure that our review processes support academic program development. We believe that Senate consideration of these recommendations as well as others that may evolve through discussions would benefit all and reduce the time required for implementing identified program improvements to support student success.