

Cockrell School of Engineering Procedures for Considering Curriculum and Academic Policies

Procedures

Each departmental faculty has considerable autonomy in establishing the curriculum and academic policies for the department's degree programs. As such, consideration of general academic policies and curricular changes typically originates in the departments. Once vetted and approved at the department level, the department representative on the school's Degrees and Courses Committee presents the changes to the committee for discussion and a vote. This vote represents a committee recommendation to the dean on minor changes and to the school faculty on major changes. Should a negative vote by the Degrees and Courses Committee occur on major changes, a department can choose to either withdraw changes for further discussion or move forward with a presentation to the school's faculty. Catalog and curricula changes for each department are posted on the school's website at least one week in advance of the school faculty meeting to allow the faculty time to review the proposed changes before the meeting. At the school faculty meeting, changes are presented by the chair of the Degrees and Courses Committee. After presentation of each department's major legislation, there is discussion and a faculty vote. The goal in considering academic policies and curricular changes in this manner is to build consensus between the faculty and school administration. As outlined in the *Handbook of Operating Procedures*, the dean can overrule a vote of the faculty.

Degrees and Courses Committee

The Degrees and Courses Committee has one member per department. Faculty members are nominated by the department chairs and appointed by the dean. The dean also appoints the committee chair. In addition, the Degrees and Courses Committee has one undergraduate student member appointed by the dean, and the associate dean for academic affairs and the assistant dean for student affairs serve as *ex officio* members.

School Faculty Meetings

The Cockrell School of Engineering has two faculty meetings per year (one per semester), called and chaired by the dean. Notice of the meetings is given several weeks in advance to encourage and permit maximum attendance. The agenda is set by the dean after consultation with the associate and assistant deans and the department chairs. The agenda is distributed no later than one week in advance of the meeting. All faculty have the privilege of the floor during the discussion of agenda items. The *Handbook of Operating Procedures* defines faculty eligibility for voting. Typically, only curriculum matters come to a vote at school meetings, based on reports and recommendations from the Degrees and Courses Committee. No quorum rules exist, and no proxy voting is permitted. The dean's office maintains written notes on decisions made at faculty meetings.