

Redesigning Curriculum

Welcome back to the deep dive. We're taking a look at what you need to know um right from the source.

Absolutely.

And and for all of you faculty out there at the university, you know, we know curriculum redesign is something you're always doing, right? Whether you're just kind of tweaking a syllabus or like dreaming up a whole new program. Yeah.

Um but today, you know, we're diving into this article. It's called uh redesigning curriculum and it comes from this uh publication called Level Up, a mid-career guide for faculty.

I love that title. Level up.

Yeah, it's pretty cool, right? And and the best part.

What's that?

It was written by like actual faculty for faculty.

Oh, that's great.

So, you know, it's going to be like, you know, strict from the trenches kind of advice, real world stuff.

Yeah, exactly. And you can actually find this whole publication on the Center for Faculty Excellence website if you want to check it out.

Oh, wonderful.

But today, our goal is to, you know, kind of break down the key parts of this whole curriculum redesign process here at university.

Okay.

And and we're going to do it using the like the insights that your colleagues, you know, shared in this article.

Sounds good. Well, one of the things that really struck me about this level up guide was just how practical it is. You know, it's really faculty talking to other faculty about, you know, the actual steps involved in keeping our courses and programs, you know, fresh and and upto-date. So, why don't we start with something that I'm sure everyone listening has to deal with on a pretty regular basis. Updating syllabi.

Yeah, good point.

The article makes a really useful distinction between just making like minor tweaks to a syllabus versus doing a more substantial revision.

Oh yeah, that's huge, right? Like if you're just making small changes like I don't know, maybe clarifying the course title, updating the prerequisites or or just rewarding some of the descriptions. The article basically says just go for it, right? Get it done in CM course. And and this is important. They say don't forget to click that start workflow button. You know, that's what actually kicks off the update process.

Yes, that start work. flow button is key, but it's also important to remember that if you're making more significant changes,

like what?

Well, things like changing the course level or the number of credit hours, revising the learning objectives, or even like significantly altering the content of the course.

Oh, I see.

When you hit start workflow for those kinds of changes, it triggers a whole approval process.

Okay. So, that's a key difference to to keep in mind. Small tweaks, just do it, but bigger changes. Get ready for some approvals.

Gotcha. Now, what about, you know, when you're creating a brand new course from scratch. The article walks us through the internal review process for that. And it's interesting because the path is a little bit different depending on whether it's an undergraduate course or a graduate course. Yeah, that's right. What's fascinating about this whole new course process is just how many layers of review there are.

Like what?

So, let's say you're proposing a new undergraduate course. Typically, your proposal is going to go through your department or school curriculum committee first.

Mhm.

Then it goes to the college academic standards and program committee, which we call as P for short,

right?

Then it's on to the Educational Policy Advisory Committee or EPAC.

Got it.

And if your course happens to meet general education requirements, well, then the GenEd committee gets to weigh in as well.

Wow, that's a lot of committees.

It is. And for graduate courses, the review process is similar, but there are a few key differences.

Okay. What are those?

Instead of going to ASMP, graduate course proposals go to the college graduate program committee and the UNO graduate program committee.

Oh, interesting.

But in both cases, the proposal eventually ends up E-ac for the final say. So

I see. So the takeaway here is that developing a new course, it really does take time, right?

It does. Planning ahead is essential, especially if you're hoping to offer the course in a particular semester.

Yeah, I bet. And speaking of planning ahead, the guide also talks about um you know the increasing need for distance friendly courses.

Absolutely.

Which makes a lot of sense these days. So if you're thinking about like moving a course online or maybe developing you know a hybrid format, there are some specific steps to take according to the article.

Right. The first thing they recommend is having a conversation with your department chair or school director.

Okay, why is that?

Well, there might be departmental or even college level approvals that you need to get before you can move forward with developing a distance friendly course.

Oh, that makes sense.

And once you've had that initial conversation, the next step is to get in touch with the division of innovative and learning centric initiatives or ILCI as most people call it, right? ILCI.

They have a ton of expertise in online pedagogy and they can really help you design online learning experiences that are, you know, not just effective but actually engaging for students.

That's great.

It is.

Now, for those of you who are thinking even bigger, like you know, maybe you're dreaming of proposing a whole new minor or a certificate program or even like an entirely new academic program. Whoa.

The article really emphasizes that this kind of endeavor involves both internal and external reviews.

Yeah, these are major undertakings.

It is. And they can take a while, right?

Yeah. It's not unusual for these larger curriculum proposals to take up to a year to get through all the necessary approvals. year.

Yeah. But the good news is that the office of academic affairs has like a ton of resources to guide you through that process.

Oh, that's good to know. And speaking of resources, the LevelUp guide also points out that there's actually funding available for course redesign initiatives and for developing online courses.

Oh, that's fantastic.

Yeah. So, that's definitely a resource to to keep in mind.

Absolutely. And it's not just about the financial support either. The guide reminds us that we also have access to instructional designers.

Oh, right.

Who can play a really crucial role in helping us design courses that are not only pedagogically sound but also accessible to all of our students.

That's so important. So, you know, when I look at all of this information, what really strikes me is that curriculum redesign, even though it can sometimes seem kind of daunting,

I know what you mean.

It's really all about ensuring that what we offer to our students, it's it's relevant and impactful, right?

Absolutely. And I thought it was really smart of them to include those references to scholarly articles, you know, like the one by Cho uh and his colleagues from 2022 and the one by Clayton and Kloppton from 2018.

I haven't read those.

Oh, they're really interesting. They offer a much deeper dive into, you know, the theory and research behind curriculum design and redesign.

Oh, cool.

So, if anyone's interested in exploring that side of things further, those are great places to start.

Awesome. So, so basically what we're seeing here is that here at our university, whether you're making a small tweak to a syllabus or launching a whole new program, there are these like established pathways and and these really robust support systems in place.

Absolutely. And it's all geared toward the same goal, right? Continuously improving what we offer to our students.

Makes sense. You know, thinking about everything we've discussed today, it makes me wonder, how can faculty out there listening, you know, how can they strategically approach curriculum redesign in their own areas?

That's a great question.

To really make the biggest impact, right? Not just on their programs, but on the university as a whole.

Yeah, it's something to really think about
and maybe, you know, going back and revisiting that full Level up guide on the Center for
Faculty Excellence website might spark some ideas, too.

Couldn't hurt.

All right, thanks for joining me for another deep dive. My pleasure.

We'll see you next time.

Sounds good.