I. FOUNDATIONS OF CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT & MAINTENANCE

A. Overview & Definitions

1. Purpose of Curriculum Manual

This manual, created by the Curriculum Task Force Committee under the direction of the Academic Affairs and Standards Council (AASC), is designed to provide resources and guidance to faculty wishing to develop or modify courses and/or programs as well as for “retiring or suspending courses and/or programs”.

Faculty should elect to design, implement, and evaluate courses and curricula on a continual basis. Faculty have a responsibility to recognize that any development, implementation, and evaluation which takes place at the college is done in an effort to meet the needs of the students and/or the operational needs of the college.

It should be noted that some of the procedures stated in this manual are required by external agencies such as accrediting bodies, advisory boards, Minnesota State, etc., and may change without warning. It is expected that this document will remain current at all times and provide the necessary assistance to those desiring to participate in the process of curriculum development. Review and/or revisions will occur every three years or as deemed necessary by AASC committee appointment. Every effort will be made to distribute the necessary changes as they occur.

B. Roles, Rights, & Responsibilities

1. Faculty

Roles:

• To actively participate in development of learning-centered curricula that support course and program outcomes within disciplines.
• To work collaboratively with fellow scholars and community partners to design, assess, and implement quality post-secondary curricula that will equip students for success in the workplace.
• To appreciate the influence of current practice within disciplines and design curricula to reflect thought and attention to student learning outcomes.

Rights

• Freedom of intellectual inquiry
Freedom of academic instruction
Freedom to collaborate & provide input into curriculum development process
Freedom to select teaching materials and textbooks
Freedom to select teaching methods
Freedom to research and publish results

See current Minnesota State College Faculty (MSCF) contract for further details.

Responsibilities:

- **Course Syllabi**: Per Minnesota West Faculty Manual

As outlined in the Master Agreement between Minnesota State Faculty and Minnesota State, Minnesota West Community and Technical College faculty are required to distribute a course syllabus to students within one week of the first class meeting. The faculty is requested to submit their syllabus (electronically) to the Provost’s office within two weeks of the first class meeting. The course syllabus will contain the elements of the corresponding course outline, standards for evaluation of student learning, and additional information which reflects the creative work of the faculty member.

Course syllabi are examples of scholarly work and belong to faculty.

A template of the course syllabus can be found on the Minnesota West website and in this manual under Resources.

- **Course Outlines**: Per Minnesota West Faculty Manual

The course outline is the document approved by the college or university curriculum committee and shall include the course title, course description, prerequisites, total credits, lecture/lab breakdown, and student learning outcomes. Faculty should provide a copy of the course outline or the link to the course outline to their students.

- **Duplicate courses**:

  Faculty teaching the same course(s) are expected to meet on a regular basis within their respective Division/Department to align course objectives, descriptions, content, etc.

  At least 80% (preferably 100%) of course objectives and content for multiple sections of the same course must match as reflected on the course outline.

- **Academic Excellence**
When developing, updating, delivering and addressing curriculum, faculty will make every effort to ensure that the resulting curricula is of high academic quality. It should reflect the standards of academic excellence expected of post-secondary level curricula.

- Curricular changes affecting other divisions/departments:

Faculty proposing curricular changes affecting other divisions/departments will need to have an informed conversation with the affected faculty, department head, Dean, and division chair. Prior to submission of curricular documents to local curriculum committees for approval, it is recommended to dialogue with affected divisions/departments and to maintain documentation of the communication.

2. Departmental

Faculty developing new or changing curriculum may need to consider department budget. In instances where there are more than one faculty member to a department, faculty requesting curriculum changes should seek guidance from other department faculty.

3. Mn Transfer Oversite Committee

Roles:

- To approve or deny proposed curricular changes brought forward from faculty. If curricular changes are approved, the proposals will proceed to Academic Affairs and Standards Council (AASC) for further consideration and review. If curricular changes are not approved at local curriculum, the proposals will be returned to the initiating faculty and will not proceed to AASC.

Rights:

All faculty have the right to serve on Mn Transfer Oversight Committee and to propose curricular changes. Members must be capable of a non-partisan view of the ‘big picture” and individual departmental or division curricular needs.

Responsibilities:

- To determine which departments or divisions would be affected by proposed curricular change(s) to the general education core
- To evaluate whether proposed change(s) were clearly communicated and approved by involved division/department prior to submission to AASC.
• To provide support and assistance to faculty members proposing curricular changes
• To expedite processing of curricular changes to Administrative Support Staff for placement on meeting agendas and posting of documents at least 7 days prior to the next local curriculum meeting
• To coordinate with faculty proposing curricular changes, agenda items and supporting materials for submission to AASC. Materials must be submitted at least 7 days prior to the next scheduled meeting to allow time for distribution and review by the committee members
• To carefully consider the academic integrity of all proposals coming before the committee
• To ensure the General Education goals are being covered within each area within the general education core.

4. Division Chair

Roles:

• Provide division leadership for quality educational instruction, development of new curricula, and advocate for division programs
• Serve as liaison to administration to assist with curriculum development, staffing, budget, scheduling and facilities issues (as relevant)
• Demonstrate understanding of campus policies, procedures, and practices in order to assist academic leadership to implement the educational mission of the college
• Support division membership by valuing trade-based and liberal arts education, and life-long learning
• Report to the Dean responsible for the Division

Rights: Division Chairs Selection Process – Division Chairs will:

• Be nominated through division membership in April of election year using process outlined in Article 11; Subd. 6 of MSCF Master Agreement with Minnesota State
• Be an active member of the division
• Serve a 2 year term beginning with the associated Fall semester

Responsibilities: Division Chairs will assist and facilitate the following processes:

Accreditation Process:

• Assist programs in maintaining accreditations and certifications (as relevant)
• Advocate for and assist local assessment coordinator with program assessment
• Provide leadership in Higher Learning Commission Self-Study

Budget Process:

• Serve as a resource in department budget development and management (as relevant)

Facilities Process:

• Act as resource person regarding any facilities assigned to the division

Communications Process/Activities:

• Attend division, local curriculum and AASC meetings to communicate information to the division
• Schedule regular division meetings to conduct business and lead consensus-based decision making in the division, if a consensus cannot be reached the unlimited members of the division will have an opportunity to vote.
• Create communication strategies to accomplish the academic work of the division
• Assist the division faculty with curricular and college policy questions/concerns
• Assist the Academic Deans in preparation of reports/documents (HLC Self-Study, programs reviews, Minnesota State and college strategic plans, assessment plans, academic master plan, college catalog, etc.)
• Facilitate division representation at community activities and other educational institutions
• Serve as a resource to form and maintain program advisory committees (as relevant)
• Assist with orientation for new, part-time, and adjunct faculty in the division
• Plan, disseminate information to division members, and facilitate division meetings
• Encourage open communication and consensus building among division members

Curriculum Process:

• Schedule informal conversations with Provost and faculty from disciplines affected by proposed curricular changes
• Serve as a resource to division faculty for curriculum updating/revision
• Assist programs/curricular areas with program review, assessment and the maintenance of Minnesota State and college policies
• Encourage and support faculty to use a wide variety of teaching/learning strategies
• Promote mutual respect and appreciation for personal differences and approaches to teaching
• Encourage developmental learning opportunities and student support services
• Maintain an awareness of educational and program-related trends and changes

**Student Recruitment and Advising:**

• Promote student recruitment efforts within the division and coordinate as needed with Marketing and Admissions
• Support a comprehensive academic advising process for students within the division

**Scheduling:**

• Assist Campus Administrators in the development of an efficient and flexible course schedule that meets the needs of a diverse student population.

**Distance Learning:**

• Serve as an advocate for Distance Learning in the division
• Provide leadership to the division faculty to meet the college Distance Learning goals

Division Chairs may not “exercise other supervisory responsibilities as defined by M.S. 179A.03, Subd.17” (2009-2011 MSCF Master Agreement with Minnesota State, p. 42).

5. **Program Coordinator/Director**

A program is a group of related courses that a student must take to receive the designated certificate, diploma or degree.

Some programs at Minnesota West have program coordinators/directors. Curricular changes within respective programs will require consultation with program faculty, i.e. nursing, law enforcement, etc.

6. **Departmental Head**

Faculty developing new or changing curriculum may need to consider departmental budget. In instances where there are more than one faculty member to a department, faculty should seek guidance from other department faculty. Fiscal impact should always be a consideration when developing curriculum. Minnesota West is a comprehensive college with liberal arts and technical faculty at its campuses and centers.
7. Advisory Committee

Advisory committees are comprised of industry and community members to facilitate curricular changes and program improvement. Faculty is required to have a minimum of 1 advisory committee per year. All curricular changes must be approved by respective advisory committees as applicable. Also, see flowchart in this manual to determine process to follow. See Minnesota State Advisory Committee Handbook for more information.

8. Customized Training and Management

Customized Training and Management courses offered for credit must follow the curricular process to seek approval of their recommended course. See process as outlined in this manual.

9. Academic Affairs and Standards Council (AASC) Roles:

- Final approval or denial of changes, additions, and/or deletions to college curricula
- To meet with administrative representatives on curricular matters presented to AASC by faculty members and administration

Rights:

- AASC shall consist of two-thirds faculty members and one-third administrative and/or other staff
- Division chairs, presidents of both North and South Chapters of the Minnesota West CTC faculty organizations, administrative designee, and faculty members shall comprise the membership
- A faculty member shall serve as AASC Chair
- Administrative members shall be selected by the college president after consultation with presidents of both North and South Chapters of Minnesota West CTC faculty organizations and shall include the Provost
- Up to two additional faculty members may be selected to ensure each campus of the Minnesota West Community and Technical College is represented on the AASC. Other individuals may be invited to address the AASC

Responsibilities:

- To expedite processing of curricular items approved by local campus curriculum committees engaged in curricular changes which must be submitted to Minnesota State
• To provide support and assistance to local campus curriculum committees making curricular changes
• To establish a system for maintaining curriculum records, course outlines, and course descriptions
• To carefully consider the academic integrity of all proposals presented to AASC.
• To ensure update and revision of curricular processes by faculty

10. Administrative Responsibilities

The college Provost is responsible for institutional administration of curriculum by serving on the Academic Affairs and Standards Council (AASC).

Minnesota State must approve all new programs or duplication of existing programs. Applications for new programs or program duplication may be initiated by the appropriate campus dean and/or faculty.

Minnesota State must also approve all degree or diploma granting programs. To deliver degrees and diplomas online, the College must have online accreditation by The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA). In May 2004, HLC accredited all Minnesota West’s online degree and diploma programs.

All proposals for program redesign, suspension, reinstatement, replication, relocation or closure must be presented to the AASC for approval. Once AASC approves of the changes, the Central Academic Office will submit the request to Minnesota State.

11. Curricular Assessment/Evaluation

The Curriculum Assessment Manual may be found on the Minnesota West website. Course assessment forms must be completed for each course taught at the end of each semester. Program assessment must be completed at the end of each year.

12. Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL)

The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) began as a Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System (Minnesota State) initiative and continues today at Minnesota West as faculty-led programming for professional growth of the faculty.

CTL has a representative on each campus that coordinates activities for faculty development. You may contact these individuals for resources or to ask about development opportunities.
13. Glossary of Terms

**Academic freedom** - Liberty to teach, pursue, and discuss knowledge, without restriction or interference, as by school or public officials.

**Assessment** - Method of evaluating student performance in a particular course.

**Central Academic Office** - refers to the administrative support staff located in the Provost’s office

**Certificate** - Completion of 9-30 credits required for a particular program that is intended to provide students with employment skills.

**College Level Examination Program (CLEP)** – allows students to demonstrate their mastery of college-level material in introductory subjects and earn college credit by testing and receiving qualifying scores on specific exams.

**Competency Based Education (CBE)** - enables entering students to receive college credits for knowledge, skills, and abilities that they have gained from life experience.

**Concurrent enrollment** - a program where high school students can take college level courses in their HS during the regular school day. National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP).

**Course objectives** - Statements that describe the knowledge, skills and attitudes a student should be able to exhibit as a result of instruction.

**Course outline** - a generic description of the main concepts addressed in a particular course. To include course name, number, lecture/lab hours, and topics to be covered.

**Course syllabus** - Document that outlines the goals and objectives of a course, the prerequisites, evaluation and grading scheme, materials to be used, topics to be covered, and a schedule.

**Curriculum** - Subjects that are taught or topics within subjects that are taught at educational institutions.

**Degree** - Completion of 60-80 credits in a particular program, resulting in an Associate in Arts, Associate in Science, or Associate in Applied Science degree.

**Diploma** - Completion of 30-72 credits required for a particular program that is intended to provide students with employment skills.

**Program** - A group of related courses that a student must take to receive the designated certificate, diploma or degree.
**Student learning outcomes/learning outcomes (SLO)** - Statements that specify observable, measurable outcomes students will be able to demonstrate after completion of the course.

**Post-secondary enrollment option (PSEO)** - High school students enrolled in college level courses can earn postsecondary credits while completing high school graduation requirements. (Minnesota State definition)