Subject: Online Curricular Action Item Approval Process for General Faculty

Justification: The Faculty Affairs Committee proposes the adoption of an electronic, online debate and balloting system for approval of curricular items by General Faculty. This system would replace the current, in-person voting system used at General Faculty meetings.

Language: To execute this initiative, the committee proposes adding the following language to the Faculty Handbook as item IV-D in Section One: Administrative Structure.

D. Electronic Voting for Curricular Items

At the discretion of the Faculty Senate, curricular action items placed on the agenda of the General Faculty can be voted on electronically. Electronic voting will use the same basic protocols as General Faculty votes, and voting rights will extend to all members of the General Faculty as defined in section IV-A. Washburn staff and faculty who are not eligible to vote will have the opportunity to participate in online debates.

On the seventh business day following a Faculty Senate meeting, the General Faculty Secretary will notify all faculty and staff of any approved curricular changes via e-mail . The e-mail notice will provide directions to an online forum for debate of these items. The period of online debate will be seven days, although postings will remain viewable by the General Faculty throughout the subsequent voting period. Upon request, a student or member of the public may obtain guest login to a particular debate forum; those guests may view the debate, but may not contribute to it.

When the debate period ends, the General Faculty Secretary will announce by e-mail to members of the General Faculty that voting has begun. The General Faculty Secretary will assemble a list of eligible voting faculty at the beginning of each academic term and provide it to the ISS staff. The announcement message will include instructions for accessing a single online ballot for all curricular items requiring a vote. This ballot will display each curricular item, as worded by the Faculty Senate. For each item, the voter will answer two questions, the first regarding whether the item is deemed appropriate for online voting, and the second regarding whether, if online voting is approved by the faculty, the item should pass as worded. If a faculty member does not approve of online voting, he or she is opting to delay debate and voting until the next in-person General Faculty meeting. A quorum (greater than 33%) of the General Faculty must participate in the vote. The voting period will be seven days. If a quorum is not met, then a vote on the curricular items in question will be delayed until the next General Faculty meeting. To prevent double votes, the hyperlink and ballot page will be accessible to each eligible faculty member only once.

At the end of the voting period, the General Faculty Secretary and the Faculty Senate Secretary, will obtain, tally, and confirm the results, then report those results to the General Faculty. In addition, the General Faculty Secretary will retain a record of individual faculty votes, but only for verification purposes. Individual voting data will not be shared unless a request is made via the Kansas Open Meeting Act.

If a majority of respondents vote to permit online voting, then their contingent votes on whether to approve the item as currently worded will be tallied. If a majority of respondents vote to approve the item as worded, then the curricular change is approved, and the process is complete. If a majority of respondents vote against online voting, the item will be placed on the agenda for the next General Faculty meeting.

Effective Date: August 2011, effective at initiation of Fall 2011 semester.

Financial Implications: The VPAA's office is committed to providing the resources necessary to secure licenses for the balloting software system. ISS has been briefed on its role assisting with this process.

Approved by Faculty Senate:
April 11, 2011

Submitted by: Dr. Matt Arterburn
Chair, Faculty Affairs Committee