Request for Support from Curriculum Council for STARS Course Review Process

Who:
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Purpose:
To request support in improving our data collection process for the curriculum section of STARS. STARS is the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System for AASHE. Learn more about STARS at https://stars.aashe.org/pages/about/. You can review the OSU STARS report at https://stars.aashe.org/institutions/oregon-state-university-or/report/2011-01-31/

Context:
Currently we are working on improving our course review methodology for the curriculum section of STARS. STARS requires us to determine the number of sustainability related and focused courses offered at OSU relative to the total number of courses. In order to fulfill this requirement we are required to 1) use the course catalogue to create a complete list of all courses offered 2) eliminate redundancies in the course list 3) review course titles and descriptions to determine relevance and 4) acquire syllabi for courses that need further investigation to determine their relevance. Our current challenges with this process include:

- The amount of time required to create a course list from the catalogue
- Extrapolating the level of sustainability relevance from course descriptions and syllabi
- Some syllabi are stored on the OSU website under ‘General Catalog and Schedule of Classes’ but are not always current. STARS requires syllabi to be updated within 3 years to be relevant

Our Goals Include:
- Be able to accurately and efficiently complete STARS and track progress over time
- Accurately and efficiently determine sustainability relevance in course descriptions and syllabi

Action Needed from the Curriculum Council:
- Specially designate sustainability-focused and related courses a in the course catalog
- Keep the ‘General Catalog and Schedule of Classes’ updated with syllabi no older than 3 years
- Require alignment between content in course descriptions and syllabi

The Benefit:
- A more accurate STARS report with the ability to track real progress over time
- The outcomes of our goals will also benefit the Sustainability Double-Degree as Matt Shinderman and his committee continue to develop areas of emphasis for their students
- Future degree programs will be able to create their list of required and recommended courses with ease
- Students will have a complete and updated resource of all courses offered at OSU