Curriculum Mapping Workshop
Notes for participants

What is a curriculum map?
A curriculum map is a communication tool that visually aligns learning outcomes with the content of individual courses or experiences in the program. It is typically designed as a matrix, with the learning outcomes listed in the first column and the individual courses or experiences listed on the top row (or the other way around.) For graduate programs, it may be more useful to list the experiences rather than courses (dissertation proposal, defense, qualifying exams, etc.)

Some benefits of curriculum mapping for faculty:
- Improves understanding of how the curriculum fits together
- Helps with course sequencing
- Reveals strengths, gaps, redundancies the curriculum
- Leads to more effective assessment.

Types of curriculum maps
An <u>overview</u> map is the simplest type of curriculum map. It is a matrix of courses and learning outcomes, where an indicator (X or ✓) is placed in the matrix cells for those courses that address a specific learning outcome. These are identified through a review of course syllabi, and feedback from instructors.

The <u>level of knowledge/skill</u> map describes the level that students are expected to achieve on this learning outcome in a given course. This type of map helps inform decisions on course sequencing. It illustrates opportunities for acquisition of disciplinary knowledge/skills before mastery is expected. Common indicators for levels include:
> **I**ntroduce, **E**mphasize, **M**easure
> **I**ntroduce, **D**evelop, **M**aster, **A**ssess
> **I**ntroduce, **R**einforce, **A**ssess
> **I**nstruction, **P**ractice, **F**eedback

The <u>assignment/assessment</u> map specifies what type of embedded assessment is included in courses for each learning outcome (exam questions, written assignments, student research papers, presentations, etc.) This type of map is useful for identifying opportunities to harvest evidence of student learning.

Analyzing the curriculum map
Once the curriculum map is completed, it should be analyzed for program strengths, gaps and sequencing issues:
- Are there courses without an indicator in any cell? How does that course contribute to the curriculum?

- Does a particular learning outcome relate to every course? Is this because the learning outcome is overly broad? Is it because of redundancy in the curriculum? Something else?

- Does a particular course relate to every learning outcome? Is it an introductory survey course or capstone? If not, is the course too broad?

- Are there gaps? Each learning outcome should be introduced, reinforced and mastered at least once across multiple courses.

Best practices in curriculum mapping
- The program curriculum map should reflect consensus of the faculty who are teaching in the program. Multiple instructors of the same course should agree on which outcomes are addressed in that course.

- Publish the completed map to faculty and students.

- Mapping should allow programs to justify each course in their curriculum. All courses, required and elective, across all tracks, should relate to one or more student learning outcomes.

- Is the program trying to do too much? Eliminate outcomes that are not highly-valued and focus on the highly-valued ones, strengthening the curriculum to address those outcomes more thoroughly.

- The curriculum map should be revisited during the assessment cycle, making changes as disciplines evolve.

Sources for more information and examples of maps

University of West Florida:
http://www.uwf.edu/cutla/curriculum_maps.cfm

Loyola Marymount University:
http://www.lmu.edu/about/services/academicplanning/assessment/Assessment_Resources/Curriculum___Outcome_Maps.htm

University of Hawaii at Manoa: http://manoa.hawaii.edu/assessment/howto/mapping.htm

Texas A&M International: http://www.tamiu.edu/adminis/iep/currmaps.shtml

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