# What BCC is Proposing

Right now, if one college wants to adopt a course that already exists at another college---for example, if Laney wants to add a course that already exists at Merritt---then the college that already has the course has a chance to object. Ultimately, if the two colleges cannot agree on how to move forward, then the issue comes to a vote at CIPD. The majority decides whether the college proposing to adopt the course will be allowed to adopt it.

BCC is proposing that we change this policy. Specifically, we think that if a college wants to adopt a course that already exists elsewhere within the district, then they should be allowed to do so. The college or colleges that already have the course should not be allowed to object and potentially block the first college from adopting the course.

# Why We Think It’s a Good Idea

There are two main reasons why we think this would be a good change.

The first is that it would open up more ways for students to take courses within our district. Some colleges would decide to adopt some courses that are currently only offered elsewhere, and in those cases students would no longer be limited to the one or two colleges that have historically offered a course. Those extra options might be options that work a lot better for some students.

If that means that some students who would have taken a course at the college that has traditionally offered it now take it at a different college instead, then that should not phase us. If a student chooses to take a class somewhere other than where it has historically been offered, then that is presumably because that new option works better for the student. So why would we deprive the student of that option? To maintain enrollment in the course in question at the college that has historically offered it? We should not prioritize maintaining that enrollment number over giving the student an option that works better for them.

Also, it’s not even necessarily true that increased enrollment in a course at one of our colleges comes at the expense of enrollment in that course at one of our other colleges. A student who enrolls in a course at Laney, for example, might not have enrolled in that course at some other college in our district had Laney not been an option. If the student was not able to take the course at Laney, they might have decided to complete the course at some local college outside of our district, or online at some other college in the state, or they might have even decided not to do the coursework at all. So, by increasing the options that we as a district provide to students for taking a course, we might even attract or retain students who would have ended up outside of our district completely. We’re not necessarily just drawing students from each other anyways.

The second reason we think that our proposed change would be beneficial is that the existing policy also has harmful outcomes that were never intended, which our proposal would avoid.

One example is that the existing policy gives colleges a strong incentive to be the first in the district to have a course. For, under the existing policy, if you propose a course first, then no one can say that you are copying them. Whereas, if another college proposes the course before you, then they could try to block you if you ever try to get the course too.

In response to this incentive, faculty sometimes try to rush new courses through, so that they can beat other colleges to the punch. This is not a recipe for creating good curriculum. BCC’s proposal would remove the incentive at play here because, under the policy that we are proposing, being first to have a course doesn’t matter. A college that already has a course would not be allowed to object when another college also wants to offer that course. So, under the policy that we are proposing, your college can happily let another college develop new courses, without worrying that that will somehow prevent your college from having those courses in the future. In fact, another college developing a course and adding it to their curriculum in some ways makes it easier for your college to have that course in the future, since the other college will already have done the work preparing the course outline.

Another example is that the existing policy puts the colleges in conflict with each other. The votes at CIPD over whether a college will be allowed to add a course that already exists elsewhere are often contentious, and frequently leave people feeling frustrated and angry. The ill-will and mistrust that these disputes generate bleed into our other work, and even make faculty at large hesitant to engage with curriculum, lest they end up embroiled in some argument at CIPD.

We would be better off if we decided one and for all to stop arguing over who gets to have what courses. If a college wants to adopt a course that already exists within the district, then let’s agree to just let them have it. This is what we are proposing.