



Date: February 24, 2020

To: Veena Prabhu, Academic Senate Chair

From: Arash Jamehbozorg, Educational Policy Committee Chair

Copies: R. Roquemoire, M. Hawley, C. Pugh

Subject: Proposed New Policy: Timely Progress to Degree Completion for Undergraduate Students – Milestones and Advising Guidelines, Chapter IV of the Faculty Handbook (EPC 19-21)

During AY2018-19 and 19-20, EPC reviewed the policies on the “Timing of Undergraduate Advisement” and the “Policy on Changing a Major or Declaring a Dual Major or Minor,” both of which include information about when students should declare a major.

The policy conversation was initially precipitated by questions raised by EPC members about whether first-time freshmen who brought in AP, IB, or community college credits should be held to the unit limits when it comes to declaring majors or minors. Our current policy penalizes students who might arrive with as many as 30 units, limits their exploration period, essentially pushing them to graduate in three years. EPC also noted that it seemed potentially confusing to have multiple policies that address related issues in different locations.

In their current form, these policies do not emphasize their underlying context or purpose. Namely, these policies are designed to ensure that students remain on track to timely degree completion and in good standing with various financial aid requirements. Current policies place their emphasis on constraining changes of major and minor in terms of accumulated units and effectively focus advising discussions and decisions around the calculation of units. Current policies fail to adequately articulate how advising should support students in meeting milestones to graduation.

This new policy replaces both current policies with a more comprehensive approach that will help students have a better understanding of how to make timely progress towards degree, and that will empower faculty and advisors to have more holistic discussions with students about their progress and approve changes to students’ majors and minors that support their graduation goals.

1 **TIMELY PROGRESS TO DEGREE COMPLETION FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS –**
2 **MILESTONES AND ADVISING GUIDELINES**

3 THIS POLICY IS DESIGNED TO PROVIDE CLEAR GUIDELINES THAT WILL HELP STUDENTS GRADUATE
4 IN A TIMELY MANNER, REMAIN IN GOOD STANDING WITH FINANCIAL AID, AND IN COMPLIANCE
5 WITH CSU POLICIES ABOUT TIME TO DEGREE. IT ALSO PROVIDES INFORMATION ABOUT THE
6 ROLE THAT ADVISORS AND THE UNIVERSITY PLAY IN SUPPORTING STUDENTS ALONG THE WAY.

7 **FIRST AND SECOND YEARS:**

8 DURING THEIR FIRST YEAR, FRESHMEN WILL BE ENCOURAGED TO EXPLORE THEIR MAJOR
9 OPTIONS. STUDENTS WHO HAVE SELECTED A PROSPECTIVE MAJOR SHOULD VALIDATE THEIR
10 CHOICE THROUGH THEIR COURSEWORK, INTERACTIONS WITH THEIR DEPARTMENTS, AND
11 ENGAGEMENT WITH OTHER CAMPUS RESOURCES, INCLUDING THE CAREER CENTER AND
12 STUDENT CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS. ADVISORS WILL SUPPORT STUDENTS THROUGHOUT THIS
13 PROCESS. THEY WILL PROACTIVELY IDENTIFY AND SUPPORT STUDENTS WHO ARE OFF TRACK AND
14 HELP STUDENTS SELECT AND AFFIRM THEIR MAJOR AND DEGREE PATHWAY BY THE END OF
15 THEIR SECOND YEAR.

16 **THIRD YEAR AND BEYOND:**

17 WHEN FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN REACH THEIR THIRD YEAR, AND TRANSFER STUDENTS ARE IN
18 THEIR FIRST YEAR, THEY WILL HAVE DECLARED A MAJOR. ADVISORS AND FACULTY WILL
19 ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO EXPLORE THEIR MAJOR MORE DEEPLY THROUGH COURSEWORK,
20 RESEARCH, SCHOLARLY AND CREATIVE ACTIVITIES, AND BY PARTICIPATING IN CO-AND EXTRA-
21 CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES THAT WILL PREPARE THEM TO EMBARK UPON A CAREER OR PURSUE A
22 POST-BACCALAUREATE DEGREE.

23 BY THE TIME FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN REACH THE SECOND SEMESTER OF THEIR THIRD YEAR (AND
24 TRANSFER STUDENTS THEIR FIRST YEAR), STUDENTS SHOULD BE WORKING WITH ADVISORS TO
25 ENSURE THAT THEY ARE COMPLETING DEGREE REQUIREMENTS NEEDED IN ORDER TO APPLY FOR
26 GRADUATION IN THE FALL OF THEIR FINAL YEAR.

27 STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO MEET THE FOLLOWING MILESTONES ALONG THE PATHWAY TO
28 THEIR DEGREE:

29 *ADVISING FOR FIRST-TIME STUDENTS*

- 30
- 31 • FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN AND TRANSFER STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO PARTICIPATE IN
ACADEMIC ADVISING BEFORE THE BEGINNING OF THEIR FIRST YEAR AT CAL STATE LA
 - 32 • FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN ARE REQUIRED TO MEET WITH AN ADVISOR DURING THEIR FIRST
33 YEAR TO VALIDATE THAT THEY ARE ON THE RIGHT PATH AND/OR TO EXPLORE
34 ALTERNATIVES.

35 *DECLARING A MAJOR*

- 36 • FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN SHALL DECLARE A MAJOR BY THE END OF THE SECOND YEAR; AN
37 OPTION OR CONCENTRATION WITHIN THE MAJOR MUST ALSO BE DECLARED AT THAT
38 TIME IF APPLICABLE.
- 39 • FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN WHO ARE PRE-MAJORS AND ARE NOT ON TRACK TO BE ABLE TO
40 COMPLETE THEIR MAJOR SPECIFIC CRITERIA BY THE END OF THEIR SECOND YEAR MAY BE
41 GRANTED AN EXTRA SEMESTER UNDER THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:
- 42 ○ IF THEY NEED AN ADDITIONAL SEMESTER TO PURSUE A MAJOR IN THEIR HOME
43 COLLEGE
- 44 ○ IF THEY NEED AN ADDITIONAL SEMESTER TO COMPLETE PRE-MAJOR
45 REQUIREMENTS FOR A DIFFERENT MAJOR WITHIN THEIR HOME COLLEGE
- 46 • STUDENTS WHO ARE NOT ABLE TO MEET MAJOR SPECIFIC CRITERIA FOR A MAJOR IN
47 THEIR HOME COLLEGE WILL BE REFERRED TO THE UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC ADVISEMENT
48 CENTER AS “EXPLORING” STUDENTS TO FIND A MAJOR THAT THEY CAN COMPLETE IN A
49 TIMELY MANNER.

50 *CHANGING MAJORS OR ADDING A MAJOR OR MINOR (I.E., CHANGING DEGREE OBJECTIVES)*

- 51 • STUDENTS MAY ONLY CHANGE DEGREE OBJECTIVES IF THEY CAN COMPLETE THOSE
52 REQUIREMENTS IN SIX YEARS (FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN) OR FOUR YEARS (TRANSFER
53 STUDENTS).
- 54 • CHANGING MAJORS IN OR AFTER THEIR THIRD YEAR (FOR FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN) OR IN
55 THEIR FIRST YEAR OR LATER YEAR (FOR TRANSFER STUDENTS) IS PERMITTED UNDER
56 CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES. STUDENTS SEEKING TO DO SO SHOULD BE ABLE TO COMPLETE
57 THEIR DEGREE REQUIREMENTS WITHIN SIX YEARS (FOR FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN) OR FOUR
58 YEARS (FOR TRANSFER STUDENTS). THEY SHOULD MEET WITH AN ADVISOR TO REVIEW A
59 DEGREE PLAN AND DISCUSS CAREER GOALS. THE ADVISOR SHALL REVIEW AND APPROVE
60 THE DEGREE PLAN TO ENSURE THAT IT DOES NOT EXCEED THESE LIMITS.

61 *PREPARING FOR GRADUATION*

- 62 • FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN SHOULD APPLY FOR GRADUATION DURING THE FALL TERM OF
63 THEIR FOURTH YEAR IF THEY ARE PLANNING TO GRADUATE IN FOUR YEARS (DURING THE
64 FALL TERM OF THEIR SECOND YEAR FOR TRANSFER STUDENTS);
- 65 • FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN WHO HAVE NOT APPLIED FOR GRADUATION BY THE END OF THEIR
66 FIFTH YEAR AND TRANSFER STUDENTS WHO HAVE NOT APPLIED FOR GRADUATION BY
67 THE END OF THEIR THIRD YEAR MAY BE REQUIRED TO MEET WITH AN ADVISOR TO AGREE
68 UPON A TIMELY GRADUATION PLAN. IN RARE CIRCUMSTANCES, SHOULD THE ADVISING
69 PLAN PROVE UNSUCCESSFUL, THE UNIVERSITY MAY INITIATE ADDITIONAL ACTIONS
70 DESIGNED TO FACILITATE GRADUATION, INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING:

- 71 ○ IDENTIFICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF APPROPRIATE COURSE
72 SUBSTITUTIONS THAT WILL HELP THE STUDENT COMPLETE DEGREE
73 REQUIREMENTS;
74 ○ LIMITING STUDENTS TO ONE MAJOR THAT CAN BE COMPLETED IN A TIMELY
75 MANNER;
76 ○ RESTRICTING ENROLLMENT TO COURSES REQUIRED TO GRADUATE IN THE MAJOR
77 FOR WHICH GRADUATION IS MOST LIKELY TO OCCUR IN A REASONABLE TIME;
78 ○ IN THE RARE CASE OF STUDENTS WHO HAVE MET GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS
79 BUT HAVE NOT APPLIED FOR GRADUATION, THE UNIVERSITY MAY
80 AUTOMATICALLY GRADUATE THEM; SUCH STUDENTS WILL BE CHARGED
81 GRADUATION FEE.

82 *EXCEPTIONS:* SOME STUDENTS, SUCH AS STUDENTS WHO ARE NOT ABLE TO BE CONTINUOUSLY
83 ENROLLED, OR STUDENTS WHO ARE UNLIKELY TO MEET GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS FOR
84 THEIR CURRENT MAJORS, MAY REQUIRE AN EXCEPTION TO THE LIMITS IN THIS POLICY.
85 STUDENTS REQUESTING AN EXCEPTION TO THE LIMITS IN THIS POLICY SHOULD FILE AN APPEAL
86 FOR AN EXCEPTION TO ACADEMIC POLICY TO THE AVP OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES. THE
87 APPEAL MUST INCLUDE A RATIONALE, SUCH AS SPECIFIC CIRCUMSTANCES BEYOND THE
88 STUDENT'S CONTROL, AND AN ADVISOR-APPROVED PLAN TO GRADUATE.