

Adopted: March 12,2002

ACADEMIC SENATE
of
CALIFORNIA POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY
San Luis Obispo, CA

AS-582-02/IC

RESOLUTION ON
PROCESS FOR CHANGE OF MAJOR

- 1 WHEREAS, Cal Poly requires students to declare their major upon entrance; and
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3 WHEREAS, Some departments/programs expect students to make progress towards their stated
4 degree while attempting to change into their desired major; and
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6 WHEREAS, Some change of major processes are unwieldy; and
7
8 WHEREAS, Some students may not gain acceptance into their desired major within a
9 reasonable time period; therefore, be it
10
11 RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate adopt the attached *Process for Change of Major*
12 document.

Proposed by: Academic Senate
Instruction Committee
Date: December 7,2001
Revised: February 21 & March 12, 2002

PROCESS FOR CHANGE OF MAJOR

Applies to matriculated undergraduate students at Cal Poly wishing to change major. The "target" major is the major to which a student wishes to change.

Minimum Period at Cal Poly

An application for internal change of major will not be considered until/unless a student has completed at least one quarter at Cal Poly;

Consultation

Prior to applying for a change of major, students must consult with the department chair/head in the target major and are strongly advised to consult with at least one of the following:

- 1) Department chair/head in the current major
- 2) Faculty in the target major
- 3) Advising Center staff in the current major
- 4) Advising Center staff in the target major
- 5) Career Services staff

Process for Admitting Students to Target Major

Depending on the degree of impaction of the target major (i.e., the relationship between the number of applicants to the major and the number of places available), decisions on admitting students who wish to change major will be made by one or other of the following processes.

Each major will publicize in advance which process it is using.

- 1) Applicants will be evaluated against published performance criteria. Those who meet the criteria will automatically be admitted to the major and will be so notified prior to the start of the next course registration period; OR
- 2) Applicants meeting published minimum performance criteria will be considered for acceptance into a limited number of available spaces in the major. At a minimum, this selection process will take place twice each year, early in the fall and spring quarters, and applicants will be notified of the results before the course registration periods for the following winter and fall quarters, respectively.

Unsuccessful applicants may be counseled to try again in another quarter and/or directed to Career Services for help in developing alternative plans.

Performance Criteria

The performance criteria established by departments/programs for changing majors will be designed primarily to assess the student's likelihood of achieving success in the new major (taking into account the possibility that poor past performance at Cal Poly may in part reflect an inappropriate choice of major on entry). As far as possible, performance criteria for change of major:

- 1) will discourage students from seeking "backdoor" entry to a more impacted major by first applying to a less impacted (and more readily accessible) major, while
- 2) accepting a responsibility to treat existing Cal Poly students who are acting in good faith somewhat more favorably than those applying from the outside.

Time Needed to Meet Performance Criteria

Performance criteria should not impose an unreasonable burden on students; that is, a student

who is in good standing and is academically prepared for the lower division courses needed to satisfy the criteria should be able to complete this coursework within two to three quarters.

Waiting Lists and Repeated Applications

Majors may not keep waiting lists of students who have been deemed admissible but whose entry into the major is being delayed pending space availability. Applicants will be admitted only if they can be accommodated promptly; others will be rejected. Denied students may re-apply at a later date but should be made clearly aware that they will not be given preference based on persistence (i.e., repeated applications).

Option for Reviewing Freshmen Students

When a freshman student applies to change major within the first three quarters after entering Cal Poly, the target major has the option, where feasible, of first considering the student on the basis of his/her academic MCA score, possibly combined with a specified Cal Poly grade point average, *in lieu of employing other performance criteria*. Feasibility may depend on whether the MCA scores for the originating and target majors are based on the same formula, and on the availability of relevant historical data. If this option is selected, the target major will:

- 1) Recalculate the academic MCA as if the student had applied to the target major on entry.
- 2) Compare with the academic MCA cut-off used to determine admissions for the fall quarter in which the student first enrolled (when the student first enrolled in winter, the comparison will be made with the admissions cut-off for the *preceding* fall; when the student first enrolled in summer, the comparison will be made with the admissions cut-off for the *following* fall).
- 3) Admit the student if his/her MCA exceeds this cut-off, there is space available within the target major, and (where applicable) the student meets the Cal Poly grade point average requirement prescribed by the target major.

A freshman student who is considered in this manner but fails to meet the criteria for admission based on MCA will still be subject to review under the target major's normal process for change of major decisions.

Communications Regarding Satisfactory Progress in Current Major

The communications sent to students who are not meeting the requirements for making satisfactory progress within their current major should be constructive in tone while clearly indicating:

- 1) the nature of these requirements;
- 2) the potential consequences of failing to meet them; and
- 3) the "window of opportunity" that is available for students seeking to change major.

Deviations from Process for Change of Major

Programs/departments may deviate from the process described above only with the explicit prior and timely approval of the Vice Provost for Academic Programs and Undergraduate Education. Any such approved deviations must be clearly and widely communicated to the campus via the web and other means; in particular, they must be communicated to the various campus advising centers and to all students currently trying to change to the affected majors.

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CAL POLY

State of California

Memorandum

ACADEMIC SENATE

SAN LUIS OBISPO
CA 93407

To: UnnyMenon
Chair, Academic Senate

Date: May 24, 2002

From: 
Warren J. Baker
President

Copies: P. Zingg, D. Conn,
Deans

Subject: Response to Academic Senate Resolution AS-582-02/IC
Resolution on Process for Change of Major

I acknowledge receipt of Academic Senate Resolution AS-582-02/IC which I am pleased to approve.

As you know, once they have entered Cal Poly, even high-performing students have long complained of difficulties associated with their efforts to change majors. In some cases, they have faced the dilemma of having insufficient time to meet the requirements set by their target major before being disqualified for failing to make satisfactory progress in their existing major.

Unfortunately, there is no simple solution to the students' problems. We cannot, for example, create sufficient extra spaces to meet the demand in all majors that are heavily impacted. I appreciate the effort that went into devising the procedures included with the Resolution, which are intended to improve the manner in which we prepare and select students for admission into the available spaces. Please convey my thanks to the Academic Senate Instruction Committee, from which the Resolution emerged.

I trust that we that we can begin implementation no later than the beginning of the new academic year.