

**ACADEMIC SENATE**  
**of**  
**CALIFORNIA POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**San Luis Obispo, California**

**Background Statement:**

Title 5 curricular regulations specify the minimum and maximum number of units allowed in a degree program. A Bachelor of Arts degree (B.A.) must have 186 quarter units while the Bachelor of Science degree (B.S.) must have from a minimum of 186 units to a maximum of 198. An exemption allows Engineering disciplines to have a maximum of 210 units. In addition Title 5 states that a minimum of 36 units are to be designated as major courses in the B.A. and 54 units in the B.S.

Currently there are 7 B.A. degree programs and 51 B.S. degree programs at Cal Poly. The B.S. programs range from a total of 187 units (B.S. in Biochemistry) to 210 (B.S. Architectural Engineering, Civil Engineering, Environmental Engineering, Mechanical Engineering). 48 degree programs have 198 or more units. According to Title 5 Architecture is a five-year program with a minimum of 68 units in the major and 248 units.

Current local regulations in the Campus Administrative Manual (CAM) direct undergraduate curriculum development by designating the courses in a program as major, support, general education and breadth (GE&B), and free electives. In addition CAM specifies that the major course category must not exceed 60 quarter units for a B.A. and 70 for a B.S. GEB units range from 72 to 79. While the support and free elective categories have no upper limits, the lower limit of record for free electives is 9-quarter units (13 degree programs have 0 free electives, exceptions granted in the past by our Academic Senate).

The introduction of new degree programs and the evolution of the university curricula have led to some interesting uses of the major and support course categories. Because of the upper limit to the major column, courses which are obviously part of the major such as Senior Project, in fact entire concentrations, can be found in the support course column. Confusion has arisen as to where required major or support courses which are GE&B should be placed. The consistency and integrity of these designations are at best doubtful and faculty members designing programs as well as those evaluating curriculum end up playing games with columns.

A major objective of this resolution is to encourage curricular flexibility and restructuring. Cal Poly has traditionally developed major curricula with lengthy sequences of prerequisite and support courses. Moreover, major programs tend to specify every course the student must take. As a result, when a course is unavailable or the student is "off cycle", the student and faculty advisor have no flexibility without recourse to cumbersome deviation petitions. This same inflexibility often precludes advisors from tailoring programs to the needs of individual students. Even small changes in a rigidly constructed program can lead to restructuring of the entire program and major revisions in catalog and advising displays.

This proposal encourages major programs to be structured with a required core of courses to be taken by all students in that program, followed by a block of restricted electives to be selected with the approval of the advisor. These restricted electives can be configured into a concentration or into a general group of advisor-

approved courses which completes a broad, rather than specialized major. The Senior Project can be a natural extension of the specialized portion of the major – such as a concentration, if one is taken.

The model proposed allows departments to retain the program structure presently in place, but builds in flexibility. In addition, if the department wishes to change a course outside the core, it can easily be accommodated in the restricted electives and does not require a catalog change.

The work which has resulted in this resolution has ensued over the past two years. At the end of Spring Quarter 1990, William Rife, then interim associate vice president for Academic Affairs, and C.A. Bailey, chair of the Academic Senate Curriculum Committee, spoke with the academic councils of all seven schools about the need for guideline revisions and a proposal to do so. In addition all department chairs were contacted at the end of Winter Quarter 1991 and asked to reconfigure their programs to the proposed revised guidelines. The Academic Senate Curriculum Committee has had this topic for discussion on its agenda over the past two years. With this background the Academic Senate Curriculum Committee would like to submit the following resolution to the full Senate for its consideration:

**AS-388-92/CC  
RESOLUTION ON  
CURRICULUM**

WHEREAS, there are few definitions imposed upon curriculum by legislative or chancellor's office mandate; and

WHEREAS, the local Campus Administrative Manual (CAM) is the source of description for the categories of courses in a baccalaureate program, namely Major, Support, General Education and Breadth, and Free Electives; and

WHEREAS, CAM also specifies the maximum number of units in the major course category; and

WHEREAS, current use of these categories and unit specifications has become mechanical rather than pedagogical resulting in a loss of meaning to these designations; and

WHEREAS, university curricula have matured and evolved since the CAM regulations were first written: therefore, be it

RESOLVED: that the Academic Senate move to reinstate integrity to the curriculum structure; and be it further

RESOLVED: that the CAM regulations more accurately reflect and direct current and future curriculum on campus; and be it further

RESOLVED: that CAM be revised as follows:

410 UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS

411 Guidelines for Majors, ~~Options~~, Concentrations, and Minors

A. ~~Recognized Categories of Curricular Concentrations~~

(~~Note: For the purpose of computing grade point average at graduation, "major" is defined as follows in 1. and 2. below.~~)

~~1. Major (B.S.)~~

~~(a) For the B.S. degree the major shall consist of no less than 54 or more than 70 quarter units of courses required for graduation in each curriculum.~~

~~(1) Of the units in courses designated as major, at least 27 must be in 300 or 400 series courses.~~

~~\*(2) Of the units in courses designated as major, at least six must be required in the freshman and at least nine in the sophomore year.~~

~~\*This statement has been retained and appears below.~~

~~(b) The courses in the major, designated as "M" courses, must be exclusive of those used to satisfy the general education requirement. The "M" courses generally are those with the major departmental prefix although others may be included.~~

~~2. Major (B.A.)~~

~~(a) For the B.A. Degree the major shall consist of no less than 48 or more than 60 quarter units of courses required for graduation in each curriculum.~~

~~(1) Of the units in courses designated as major, at least 24 must be in the 300 or 400 series courses.~~

~~(2) Of the total of 186 quarter units required for the degree at least 60 must be in 300 or 400 series courses.~~

~~(3) Of the units in courses designated as major, at least six must be required in the freshman year and at least six in the sophomore year.~~

~~(b) The courses in the major, designated as "M" courses, must be exclusive of those used to satisfy the general education requirement. The "m" courses generally are those with the major departmental prefix although others may be included.~~

A. Course Categories

Curriculum course categories shall be Major Courses, Support Courses, General Education & Breadth Courses, and Free Elective Courses. Each category shall be subject to the following guidelines.

1. Major Courses

(a) Definitions

(1) Major courses shall be those having the prefix of the major program.

(2) Courses from any other prefix or discipline may be, but need not be designated as a major course.

(3) For the purpose of computing grade point average in the major at graduation specific major courses may be designated to the Evaluations Office by the department offering the program. Unless otherwise designated, all courses in the major column will be counted towards the major G.P.A.

(b) Units

(1) In accordance with Title 5, there shall be a minimum of 54 quarter units designated as major courses or course areas for the B.S. degree and a minimum of 36 quarter units for the B.A. degree.

(2) Of the units in courses or course areas designated as major, at least 27 must be in 300 or 400 series courses for the B.S. and at least 18 units for the B.A.

(3) Of the units in courses or course areas designated as major at least 15 units should designated in lower division courses.

(4) For students pursuing the same degree objective at least 50% of their major courses or course areas should be the same.

(5) Courses in the major which fulfill General Education & Breadth requirements should be listed in the Major Course category with a reference (as an asterisk) to the GE&B area.

B. Guidelines Relating to Concentrations

(c) Concentrations

(1) Definition

A concentration is block of at least five designated major courses (E.O. 283) or course areas to be chosen with the approval of the student's adviser comprising from 18 to 29 quarter units chosen to provide a special essentially different capabilities emphasis for the student. No single course should appear in every concentration: such courses should be included in the major. The courses for a concentration shall appear in the major course column.

(2) Units

At least 50% of the units in a concentration shall be the same courses or course areas for all students taking that concentration.

2. Support Courses

(a) Definition

A support course is any specified course outside of the home department. Courses with the home department prefix shall not appear in the support course category.

Support courses which fulfill General Education & Breadth requirements shall appear in the Support Course category with a reference (as an asterisk) to the appropriate GE&B area.

### 3. General Education Breadth

Those areas and courses designated as fulfilling General Education & Breadth requirements as defined by Title 5 and Executive Order 338 shall appear in the category of General Education & Breadth Courses. Areas which can be met by major and support courses shall be designated by a reference (as an asterisk) and the comment - "This requirement is met by taking the major (support) courses marked with an asterisk (\*)."

### 4. Free Electives

Free elective means a course chosen solely by the student with no curricular restrictions. There shall be a minimum of 9 units of free electives in each curriculum unless the program is recommended for an exemption by the Academic Senate and the exemption is approved by the President of the university.

### 5. General

At least 60 units of the total bachelor's degree units, for both the B.A. and B.S., shall be at the 300-400 level.

Proposed by:

The Curriculum Committee  
on April 14, 1992

**State of California**  
**MEMORANDUM**

To: Jack Wilson, Chair  
Academic Senate

Date: August 5, 1992

File No.:

From: Warren J. Baker  
President

Copies: Robert Koob  
Glenn Irvin

Subject: ACADEMIC SENATE RESOLUTIONS:  
(AS-388-92/CC-Resolution on Curriculum)  
(AS-389-92/IC-Resolution on Time Frame to Obtain Degree)  
(AS-390-92/IC-Resolution on Repeating Courses for Credit)  
(AS-391-92/Math-Resolution on Reduction of Funding for Intercollegiate Athletics)

The above first three resolutions (AS-388-390) are hereby approved and forwarded to the Academic Programs Office for implementation.

The Resolution on Reduction of Funding for Intercollegiate Athletics has been taken under advisement and has been shared with the Athletics Governing Board in its deliberations. The author of the Resolution is a voting member of the Athletics Governing Board. I appreciate the input from the Academic Senate on this subject.