

Adopted: May 31, 2016

**ACADEMIC SENATE  
Of  
CALIFORNIA POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY  
San Luis Obispo, CA**

**AS-817-16**

**RESOLUTION TO REVISE CHANGE OF MAJOR POLICY**

Background: The recent Change of Major Policy was instituted in Fall 2010 (available at <http://www.academicprograms.calpoly.edu/content/academicpolicies/policies-undergrad/change-major>), which superseded the Resolution on the Process of Change of Major (AS-582-02/IC) (available at <http://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1582&context=senateresolutions>)

When the new policy was instituted, there was the understanding that the policy would be assessed and revisited in the near future.

- 1 WHEREAS, Two Joint Councils were formed in Fall 2015 to review and revise the
- 2 Change of Major Policy; and,
- 3
- 4 WHEREAS, The Joint Councils identified five emerging issues and drafted an action
- 5 plan to address these issue (see attached Summary of Change of Major
- 6 Policy Revisions); therefore be it
- 7
- 8 RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate approve the attached Change of Major Policy.

Proposed by: Academic Senate Instruction Committee  
Date: April 26, 2016

## Summary of Significant Changes in Change of Major Policy

Overall, the proposed policy provides clarifying language that is in the current policy. Other notable changes include:

1. Removed 24-unit maximum above program requirements.
  - a. Seventy-seven percent of the departments did not follow the 24-unit maximum.
  - b. Feedback from departments – it was complicated and time consuming to calculate.
  - c. Data showed that students who changed their major were, on the average, taking only 12 units above those who did not change their major.
2. Clarified language to clearly state no courses can be required before students enter into Individual Change of Major Agreement (ICMA) – Section VI.
  - a. More than half of the departments stated they require courses before placing students into an Individual Change of Major Agreement (ICMA), which conflicts with the current and proposed policy.
  - b. Student feedback stated requiring courses before entering an ICMA caused undue stress without having an agreement in place.
3. Added statement specifically addressing students on academic probation are eligible for a change of agreement - Section IV.
4. Added a statement that directs students to the Change of Major Portlet to inquire about the change of major process – Section V.

**CHANGE OF MAJOR POLICY**  
**March 2016**  
**(January 24, 2010)**

**Policy Statement**

Because of the impact of the campus and its programs, Cal Poly students must declare a major at the time of application. After making this decision, some students may find that their interests and abilities lead them in a different direction. The university must then offer a transparent and timely process for students to change majors and successfully complete a degree program.

**(2010 Policy) Policy Statement**

Cal Poly students are required to declare a major at the time of application. Some students find that their interests and abilities lead them in a different directions. The university must offer a transparent and timely process for all students who seek to change majors.

**General Information**

Entering students are encouraged to make careful and informed decisions about their majors. All majors at Cal Poly are impacted, and it may be difficult to change majors despite students' best efforts. If students decide to change majors, doing so early in their academic career will help students make degree progress in a timely manner. This is likely to be a greater challenge for upper-division students (more than 90 units completed), including transfer students, who have fewer remaining degree requirements. Furthermore, students need to be aware that not all departments can accommodate an upper-division change of major.

**(2010 Policy) General Information - at the end of the document**

As much as possible, entering students are encouraged to make careful and informed decisions about the initial application to their declared majors. All majors at Cal Poly are impacted and it will be difficult to change into some majors despite a student's best efforts. Nevertheless, sometimes students will find that their interests, abilities, or talents will take them in a different directions than they had identified when they originally applied to Cal Poly and they may seek to change to a different major. Depending on the degree of impact of the target major (i.e., the relationship between the number of applicants to the major and the number of places available), there might only be a few spaces available for change of majors, or no spaces at all. Students who are unable to change into their desired majors might also need to consider applying to another university in the major of their choice.

If a student makes the decision to change major, doing so early in the academic career will better allow a student to make degree progress in a timely manner and stay within the university's minimum progress to degree standards; major changes late in the academic career will be restricted by the university's minimum progress standards, including the unit maximum.

All students, whether lower division (those with fewer than 90 Cal Poly units) or upper division (those with more than 90 Cal Poly units or 90 transfer units), intending to change majors must demonstrate that they can complete the new major within the minimum progress standards and the unit maximum set forth by the university. This is likely to be a greater challenge for upper division students, who will have fewer remaining degree requirements. Further, students need to be aware that not all departments can accommodate upper division change majors.

## Policy Standards (2010 Policy) - Policy Process

### I. *Minimum Time at Cal Poly*

Students must complete at least one quarter at Cal Poly before requesting a change of major. The major exploration process can begin in their first quarter, but no official change of major may be initiated at that time.

#### **(2010 Policy) *Minimum Time at Cal Poly***

Students must complete at least one quarter at Cal Poly before requesting a change of major.

### II. *Basic Criteria*

In determining standards for major changes, a department representative may consider the following criteria when considering students' requests:

- a. Eligibility for the intended major at the time of admission.
- b. Academic record (e.g. GPA, coursework, etc.).
- c. Ability to complete degree requirements in the new major in a timely manner.

If students meet the basic criteria for the intended major, an Individualized Change of Major Agreement (ICMA) may be initiated by a department representative of the intended major.

#### **(2010 Policy) *Basic Criteria that may be used in advising for determining Target Major Options***

All academic departments should give careful consideration when determining target major options. The following criteria may be considered:

1. The majors for which the student was eligible at time of admission.
2. College academic record (e.g. GPA, coursework, etc.,).
3. Remaining coursework and the student's ability to complete degree requirements in the new major within the published unit maximums for that major.

### III. *One Request Per Major*

Students who enter into a change of major agreement and do not complete the agreement's requirements, either by failing to complete the terms or by opting out due to a change of plan or interest, will not be eligible to request that same major again later in their career at Cal Poly.

#### **(2010 Policy) *One Chance to be accepted***

Students who enter into an individualized change of major agreement (ICMA) and do not complete the ICMA requirements will not be eligible to request that major again later in their career at Cal Poly.

### IV. *Academic Standing*

A change of major agreement can be initiated while students are on Academic Probation (AP), if the department offering the intended major believes that the AP status is due to students being in a less suitable major and that the new major represents a viable path toward good academic standing. A change of major agreement will be void if the students are academically disqualified prior to the completion of the agreement.

#### **(2010 Policy) *Academic Standing***

A Change of major agreement will be void if a student is academically disqualified prior to the completion of the agreement.

V. *Requesting a Change of Major*

To begin the formal change of major process, students must log into the Change of Major portlet located on the Academics tab at [my.calpoly.edu](http://my.calpoly.edu). More information is available at [advising.calpoly.edu](http://advising.calpoly.edu).

**(2010 Policy) Requesting a Change of Major**

- A. Meet with current adviser to review major options and talk about career paths. Consider also consulting with Career Services, other advisers, and faculty and/or department heads/chairs in both current and target majors.
- B. Meet with the department head/chair or designee in the target major to determine the likelihood of success in the new major.
- C. Review the curriculum requirements for the target major.
- D. If the target major is not a good fit for the student, the student will be advised to look at other options.
- E. If the student receives a positive assessment based on consideration of I.B., and it is clear that they can complete degree requirements in the new major within the unit maximum (unit maximum is 24 units above program requirements), then an ICMA will be developed (see below).

VI. *Individualized Change of Major Agreement*

- a. The change of major may be approved immediately, completed within one quarter, or completed within a maximum of two quarters.
- b. The ICMA includes the following conditions:
  - i. Students cannot be required to take courses before the ICMA begins.
  - ii. Students cannot be required to take courses that are outside of the ICMA.
  - iii. Students cannot be required to enroll in more than three specified courses or 12 units in the new major curriculum during the ICMA process.
  - iv. Students should balance their schedule with General Education (GE) or other courses that may apply to both majors.
  - v. Students' GPA requirements may include minimum GPA in courses specified in the ICMA, Term GPA, Cal Poly SLO GPA, or Higher Ed GPA.
  - vi. Students' GPA expectation(s) established by the department representative must be attainable.

**(2010 Policy) Individualized Change of Major Agreement (ICMA)**

The change of major will be approved once the student has successfully met all of the requirements of the ICMA.

The ICMA will cover no more than two quarters. The ICMA may include the following components:

- A. Maximum of three specified courses or 12 units in the target major.
- B. Additional courses and/or units allow the student to meet minimum progress standards and complete degree applicable units in both majors, whenever possible (e.g., GE courses or electives a student could use to meet degree requirements in both current and target majors.)
- C. GPA requirements, as determined by the department (e.g., overall/term GPA, GPA in major-specified courses, GPA in past two quarters).
- D. If applicable, specific steps to be met to resume good academic standing status.

**(2010 Policy)** Language Deleted/Re-worded in other Sections

A. *Completion of Change of Major*

The change of major will be approved once the student has successfully met all of the requirements of the ICMA. (deleted due to redundancy – address in section VI.a.)

B. *Timeframe*

The ICMA must be feasible to complete and be completed in no more than two quarters. (addressed in VI. a.)

C. *Publication of Change of Major Criteria*

As applicable, departments' web sites should post the minimum criteria required of all students to change major into their program including timelines. (V. – advising.calpoly.edu links to departmental criteria)

D. *Impactions Constraints*

Per the Office of the Chancellor's The California State University Enrollment Management Policy and Practices, other admissions requirements for all transfer student (internal and external) entering the target majors on impact campuses must be the same (e.g. portfolios, auditions, etc.). (deleted due to lack of clarity)