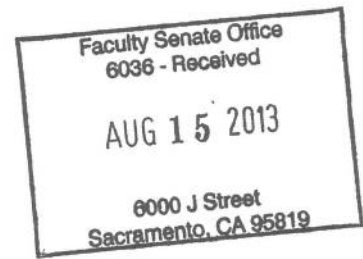




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August 15, 2013

MEMORANDUM

TO: Janet Hecsh  
Chair, Faculty Senate

FROM: Alexander Gonzalez   
President

SUBJECT: Senate Actions of May 23, 2013

I am in receipt of your memorandum of May 28, 2013 regarding actions taken by the Faculty Senate at its meeting of May 23, 2013.

The first recommendation, to replace the Credit Hour Policy (FS 12/13-142), is approved.

However, before considering approval of the other two actions taken by the Faculty Senate, I would like to remand the policies to the Senate for further consideration. These policies involve the declaration of the major by our students that I believe need further review. Following is the rationale for my request.

The current policy of declaring a major after completing 60 units is an artifact from the days when universities assumed that students were attending full-time and taking a 15-unit load. That translated into the idea that by the end of the second year of college, one should be able to choose a major. The language I have suggested below keeps the idea that a student should be able to identify what they want to major in by the end of their second year on campus, even if they have not yet accumulated 60 units. Evidence that was generated by the Office of Institutional Research and shared with various Senate policy committees also showed that there was a significant drop off in the percentage of students who completed their degrees in six years if they waited longer than four semesters to declare their major. Also, there is a general recognition that a student tied to a particular major is more likely to get the type of advising that will guide him or her to degree completion in a more effective and efficient way. For example, the earlier that a student identifies his or her major, the greater likelihood that he or she will be able to coordinate the selection of General Education courses with degree requirements facilitating the use of “double counting” or the student might choose electives within the major rather than additional General Education courses, thereby reducing the number of units accumulated by the time of graduation.

With that in mind, I suggest the following changes to the Timely Declaration of Major Policy (FS 12/13-127):

1. In Section I and Section III.C, the words “60 units” should be replaced by “prior to registering for a fifth semester of enrollment.”

2. Section III.A should be dropped (and the following sections re-lettered appropriately).
3. Additional language should be added at the end of Section III.C to read: “A student petitioning to *change* a major after the accumulation of more than 100 units of credit towards graduation must have the petition reviewed by the Dean (or Dean’s designee) of the College housing the major being abandoned and of the Dean (or Dean’s designee) of the College housing the major being added. A student petitioning to *add* a major after the accumulation of more than 100 units of credit towards graduation must have the petition reviewed by the Dean (or Dean’s designee) of the College housing the major to be added. The general expectation is that the completion of requirements for all majors will not result in the student having a total of more than 140 units of credit towards graduation nor require more than 12 semesters (for native students) or 8 semesters (for transfer students) to complete all degree requirements.”
4. In Section III.E the following sentence should be added at the end “If the Pre-Major student does not receive the recommendation to retain the Pre-Major status, then the student must visit the Academic Advising Center to formulate an alternative major plan.”

The requirement for the Dean’s review of a change of major, or adding a second major, after a student has accumulated more than 100 units towards graduation (thus not counting units that did not earn credit for graduation nor counting more than 70 units of transfer credits) was added to ensure that the decision to change from the current path was well-reasoned and that the student was aware of the impact of the change on timely progress toward graduation and was made aware of alternatives to achieving particular goals (e.g., a minor rather than a major might meet a need). The same is true for requiring a review by the Dean before adding a second or third major after a student has accumulated more than 80% of the total number of units needed for graduation. We want to make sure that a student makes progress towards graduation in a timely manner.

The sentence added to Section III.E was meant to parallel the sentence in III.D since its absence made it unclear what would happen to a student who was not permitted to retain the Pre-Major.

To ensure consistency, the changes to the Timely Declaration of a Major Policy would lead to a similar change in the Undergraduate Academic Advising Policy (FS 12/13-126): Section III. Responsibilities of Students, section A.3 would be modified to read: “Declaring a major officially prior to registering for a fifth semester of enrollment or, in the case of transfer students who transfer in 50 units or more, by the end of their first semester. Note: An Expressed Interest designation does not fulfill the requirement for declaring a major.”

In the interest of better serving our students and in anticipation of another heavy Faculty Senate agenda for the year, I would appreciate a response regarding these two policies by October 1, 2013.

Again, let me express my appreciation for all of the hard work that the Senate has done this past year. I look forward to working with the Faculty Senate this coming academic year.

Thank you for your attention.

AG/cj

cc: Charles W. Gossett, Interim Provost and Vice President, Academic Affairs  
Christine Lovely, Vice President, Human Resources