

Academic Master Plan

**Procedures for Submitting Proposals for
New Degree Major Programs for Inclusion on
San Diego State Academic Master Plan**

Mission of the University

**Summary of Trustee and System Policies
Governing Academic Planning**

Guidelines for New Bachelor's Degree Majors

Procedures for Submitting Requests for New Degree Major Programs for Inclusion on the San Diego State Academic Master Plan

Requests for new degree programs should be submitted through the college curricular screening committee and the dean of the college to curriculum services, no later than March 1 each year, for consideration for inclusion on the Academic Master Plan for San Diego State University.

Proposals are viewed by the Academic Policy and Planning and Academic Resources Planning Committees and are submitted to the Senate as an information item before being forwarded to the office of the Chancellor.

From there, proposals go to the Board of Trustees who have final authority for placing degrees on the Academic Master Plan. Typically, action is taken by the Trustees on this matter during the month of January.

The following format should be followed in submitting requests for new degrees.

1. Full and exact designation (degree terminology) for the proposed degree program, and academic year of intended implementation.
2. Name of department(s) which would offer the proposed degree program.
3. Name, title, and rank of the individuals who will be primarily responsible for drafting the proposed degree.
4. Reason for and objectives of the proposed degree program. Also include preliminary expected learning outcomes.
5. Student demand.
 - a. The expected number of majors in the year of initiation and three years thereafter.
 - b. The expected number of graduates in the year of initiation and three years thereafter.
6. Resource assessment.
 - a. Indicate the kind of resource assessment used in deciding to request to place the program on the academic plan.
 - b. If additional resources will be required, there should be an indication of commitment to secure them.
7. If the program is an occupational or professional one, summarize the need for graduates with the specific educational background.
8. If the new degree program is now offered as an option, include a brief rationale for the conversion.
9. If the new program is not commonly offered as a bachelor's or master's degree, provide a compelling academic rationale explaining how the proposed subject area constitutes a coherent, integrated degree major which has potential value to students.
10. If the proposal does not appear to conform to the Trustee policy calling for "broadly based programs," rationale should be provided.
11. Describe the relation of the program to the mission and goals of SDSU.

In some areas, program development is limited or guided by system or CPEC policy. Subjects where there are specific policy guidelines include architecture, computer science, engineering, fine and applied arts, health professions, home economics, and industrial arts and technology. "Guidelines for Breadth in New Bachelor's Degree Majors" (EP&R 85-13, See page 74) and "Definitions of Graduate Level Instruction" (EP&R 82-39, See pages 153-156) should also be consulted in the preparation of summary statements for new programs.

Mission of the University

The mission of San Diego State University is to provide well-balanced, high quality education for undergraduate and graduate students and to contribute to knowledge and the solution of problems through excellence and distinction in teaching, research, and service.

The university serves to impart an appreciation and broad understanding of human experience throughout the world and the ages. This education extends to diverse cultural legacies; accomplishments in many areas, such as the arts and technology; the advancement of human thought including philosophy and science; the development of economic, political and social institutions; and the physical and biological evolution of humans and their environment. San Diego State University accomplishes this through its many and diverse departments and interdisciplinary programs in the creative and performing arts, the humanities, the natural and physical sciences, and the social and behavioral sciences.

Academic Goals

SDSU has adopted the following academic goals to sustain and strengthen its position as a leading university:

- To encourage the intellectual and creative development of a diverse group of students by helping them learn about themselves and others, their own and other cultural and social heritages, and their environment;
- To foster development of critical thinking, reading, oral communication, quantitative and qualitative analysis as well as a commitment to lifelong learning and international perspectives needed to contribute to communities and chosen fields of endeavor;
- To provide the basis for informed citizenship in a democracy;
- To offer advanced undergraduate and graduate students professional training and preparation for further study in a broad range of disciplines, with a special emphasis on the preparation of teachers;
- To support faculty in developing specialized contributions to knowledge, including innovative curriculum and pedagogy responsive to intellectual and professional needs of undergraduate, master's, and doctoral students;
- To support faculty in their professionally related community activities and informed exchanges with diverse professional and lay communities that strengthen the university's courses and scholarship;
- To encourage scholarship, including creative and performing arts, by students, faculty and administrators from all areas of the university; and
- To continue our commitment to research, including the expansion of externally funded projects and doctoral programs where appropriate.

San Diego State University pursues its mission and goals through shared vision, a community-wide conversation out of which five goals were identified by a broad cross section of faculty, staff, students, administrators, alumni, parents, and community leaders:

- Academic excellence in all SDSU's programs and offerings;
- Educational opportunities for the whole person, both inside and outside the classroom;
- The appreciation of diversity in its many manifestations and social justice within the university community;
- The wise use of our precious human and fiscal resources; and
- An international institution where pupils become global citizens.

The vision that first motivated our founders continues to energize us. We are a community of learners, of all ages and levels of experience, engaged in a continuous journey of invention, creation and discovery.

Summary of Trustee and System Policies Governing Academic Planning (EP&R 85-19, updated AAP 91-15)

A. Trustee Guidelines

The following is a summary of academic planning policies which have been adopted over time by the Board of Trustees:

1. Curricula are to reflect the needs of students **and** of the State.
2. The foundation program for all campuses in the system consists of the liberal arts and sciences, business administration, and teaching. [The board defined specific subject areas which would be regarded as the "Broad Foundation Program." The list was updated in 1979 by the Project Team on Academic Programs and reprinted on page 33 of **Academic Program and Resource Planning in The California State University, 1980.**]
3. Programs in applied fields and professions other than those above are to be allocated within the system on the basis of (1) needs of the State; (2) needs of the campus service area; and (3) identification of employment opportunities.
4. "All colleges cannot be all things to all people." Curricula in the applied fields and professions are therefore to be located in a systemwide pattern which will achieve an equitable and educationally sound distribution of programs throughout the State.
5. While all colleges may wish to offer the same programs, the trustees exercise great selectivity in the final approval of new curricula.
6. Specialized, high-cost programs are to be allocated on the basis of review and study of the individual subject area.

Subsequent policies adopted by the board include the following:

7. Degree programs are to be broadly based and of high academic quality.
8. Unnecessary proliferation of degrees and terminologies is to be avoided.
9. A formal review of existing curricula is to be conducted by each campus for campus master planning (facilities).

B. Guidelines recommended by the Division of Academic Affairs, Plans (in **Academic Program and Resource Planning**, July 1980, page 41)

The traditional criteria for reviewing the academic plans are listed below. They generally center around need, demand, and the ability to establish programs of high quality. These considerations will continue to pertain along with considerations about the appropriateness of new curricula to campus missions.

For the five-year or ten-year Academic Master Plan of each campus:

1. Are the anticipated resources of the campus (primarily in terms of existing faculty positions and new faculty positions anticipated from total campus enrollment growth) sufficient to initiate and sustain all of the programs offered and projected? If not, will some faculty positions be reassigned from existing programs, or will the number of projected programs be reduced?
2. Is there a campus commitment to placing resources into the development of new programs rather than into existing programs?

For each program projected on the Academic Master Plan:

1. Does this program fill an unmet need in terms of (a) student demand or (b) statewide or regional manpower needs? If neither of these, is there a compelling rationale for the program?
2. Is the new program the most efficient way of meeting the need identified, or are there other alternatives?

3. Are expectations about student enrollment realistic when compared with experience at other campuses?
 4. Do programs exist on the campus or at nearby campuses from which the projected program would draw students? If so, have plans been made for the resulting enrollment declines in existing programs?
 5. If the program is one which will prepare students for a specific occupation or profession, are there current surpluses of individuals in the region or in the State so trained? If so, are there indications that the need will increase? If not, is this a wise investment of campus and State resources?
 6. If the program is one which is designed to provide professional upgrading of individuals who are already employed, are there openings in the higher professional levels?
 7. Will failure to implement this program require altering other plans of the campus? Will some instructional areas be left incomplete?
- C. Additional academic planning guidelines suggested by the Division of Academic Affairs, Plans; the Committee on Academic Planning and Program Review; and/or the Committee to Study Graduate Education in the CSU:
1. New master's degree programs should be projected only where the sponsoring department is well established and has achieved a level of quality which has been affirmed by a program review or, in subjects where national accreditation is available, by a visiting team. Attention should be given to the impact the proposed master's degree will have upon the corresponding bachelor's degree and other instructional activities of the department.
 2. New master's degree programs should be initiated only if they have the enrollment potential to support the offering of at least four graduate-level courses each year; there is evidence of the proposing department's capacity to support the level of research required for a graduate program; and sufficient graduate-level coursework can be offered to permit a student's graduate program to include 70 percent of such coursework.
 3. Resource investments/reallocations in support of new programs should be sufficient to demonstrate the campus' commitment to the success of those programs. It is rare that a coherent degree major can be designed by merely "repackaging" existing courses in an effort to reduce costs. If new programs cannot be well supported, each campus should seriously consider whether they should be initiated at all.
 4. The Academic Master Plan should be more than a list of new programs. It should represent the collective opinion of campus constituencies about which designed new programs best serve the long-term interests and development of the campus as a whole and which most contribute to advancement toward the campus goals.
 5. New bachelor's degrees should be as enduring as possible in content and title (see EP&R 85-13).

Policy Guidelines for Breadth in New Bachelor's Degree Majors (EP&R 85-13)

Each California State University annually updates its Academic Master Plan—a five-year projection of new degree majors. Recent plans have revealed a trend toward creating new bachelor's degree majors from fields previously offered as specializations within broader subjects. The trend is observable in professional and liberal arts disciplines alike. For example, unique degrees in Small Business Management, previously a subset of business, and in publishing and editing, traditionally part of English majors, have been among those proposed. There is a potential problem if the increasing specialization works against achieving some of the other expressed goals for the bachelor's degree, if it limits students' options in a changing environment and if, as a result, it does not serve students or society well.

The purpose of this paper is to address one aspect of specialization in bachelor's degrees, namely the development of new degree majors that are highly specialized in title, content, or both. The paper proposes some guidelines for campus use in reviewing Academic Master Plan proposals for bachelor's degree majors when those majors are in specialized subjects not generally or previously offered as majors in four-year colleges. Campuses may wish to add to these guidelines some of their own guidelines relating to specialization in options and concentrations.

Reasons for Increasing Specialization

Advances in knowledge typically cause changes in academic discipline content and structure and sometimes lead to whole new configurations. Some changes are critical to the vitality of the academic enterprise. But it appears that the current trend has among its causes several that are unrelated to a conception of the best ordering of knowledge or optimal ways of imparting values, understandings, theory, and competence. The kind of specialization currently observable in new majors (and sometimes in changes within existing majors) appears instead to result from artificial pressures. Some of the pressures arise from business and industry and from public officials concerned about the state of local or regional economies. Some arise from within the university by those anxious to provide an apparent variety of choice in curriculum without major resource expenditure or in response to enrollment pressures. But primarily the pressures are coming from students who associate specialization of program title, content, or both, with enhanced employability or graduate school admission. In the fall of 1983, the annual ACE-UCLA national survey of freshmen revealed that the ability to get a better job was cited by freshmen more often (76.2 percent of respondents) than any other reason for attending college. Surveys of faculty have suggested a disjunction between faculty and students in this respect. However, there are genuine differences of opinion about the desirability of narrowing the focus of bachelor's degree majors. On the one hand, Bradford College president Art Levine has called the current curriculum a victim of the survival ethic. Others argue that most if not all important outcomes of college are independent of the major and that any subject can be taught in ways that produce breadth and perspective.

The Problem

We assume that most students, while generally needing to update their specialized skills and knowledge from time to time, will nevertheless earn only one bachelor's degree in their lives. If we assume that the title and content of that degree continue to carry some kind of lifetime importance, then degree majors should be designed for comprehensiveness and durability—no matter how young or old the student. The comfort of knowing that there will be easy access to continuing education—the lifelong learning society—may lull us into neglecting responsibilities to ensure that the bachelor's degree major is as comprehensive and enduring as it can possibly be. Specialized programs that use identified occupations or skills as their titles and their knowledge bases may enhance immediate employability, but they probably do so at the expense of long-term job satisfaction, adaptability, mobility, and employability. It may also be at the expense of limiting the broadening of perspectives which might enhance creativity or the ability to synthesize or to have enriched experiences in the work environment. Specialized programs not related to specific jobs may deny students **both** employability and breadth. This has also been the case, but it seems especially so given what we can reasonably expect of the future. The “post-industrial society,” the “information economy,” the “telecommunications age,” and the “post-Gutenberg era” may be overused slogans, but they suggest something important about planning bachelor's degree majors: Imbuing the major with any kind of enduring value for students will require more effort than ever. Even with that effort and with lifetime opportunities for continuing education, that durability is threatened. It has been speculated that, within a few decades, everyone in the country will have access to nearly all accumulated information and knowledge. That is good news for those who value knowledge and learning. But even if general education programs succeed in imparting the understandings and skills needed by students to sort and use these quantities of information, we have not done enough for students or for society.

Steven Muller, president of the Johns Hopkins University, has wondered: “If we are serious about educating people to solve problems, is there anything left that enables people to integrate what they know, because we have compartmentalized knowledge so much? Are we in danger of having people who can manipulate data and hide it in compartmentalized ways?”

Some Topics for Discussion

While there are some convincing arguments for durability in the names and the content of bachelor's degree majors, there are some questions and issues which have no easy answers. There is some question that the bachelor's degree will survive as currently structured, yet proposals for new majors appear regularly and must be reviewed conscientiously. If knowledge "keeps no better than fish," can we develop and state any reasonable expectations about the durability of the major for any given student? Can expectations about comprehensiveness be framed? What are our obligations to students, many of whom will not again be able or willing to invest the concentrated time required to complete a major? What guidelines will campus faculty use in deciding what kinds of majors should lead to the bachelor's degree? When majors are proposed which have not previously been offered at four-year colleges, what criteria shall be applied to determine their propriety? Can some common understandings, theories, and contexts be identified for these decisions? At least a short list would include the ability to develop and extend knowledge in the discipline—beyond existing limits.

Review Guidelines

Guidelines are needed for campus review of new academic master plan proposals, and those suggested here could be profitably refined after thoughtful campus discussion. The following guidelines are tentatively suggested for situations involving the elevation of options or specializations to degree status or for cases where highly specialized degrees not usually offered in four-year institutions are under consideration. The guidelines assume that "broadly based degrees of high academic quality" remain the norm in The California State University and that specialized degree programs are added only when there is compelling academic rationale to add them.

1. Are there alternative curricular structures that would better serve the purposes proposed?—i.e., should the subject be offered as a certificate, a minor, or an option or concentration? Is the subject matter sufficiently complex to consider offering the program as a master's degree only? Might it be appropriate as a postbaccalaureate certificate?
2. Is there a body of knowledge which has become so sizable that unique degree status is a consequence of advancement of knowledge?
3. If the proposed degree program is preparatory to a specific occupation:
 - a. Is the occupation likely to exist over the lifetime of the student?
 - b. What is the probable lifetime of the knowledge or information that will be imparted in this major? Is the answer one that is satisfactory to the university?
4. Is the preparation narrowly conceived? If so, are there ways that preparation (and title) can be broadened?
5. Is the major accurately named?—i.e., is the title so narrow that it **unnecessarily** restricts student employment opportunities and mobility?
6. Does the major use as its foundation and prerequisites the methods, processes, skills, and knowledge of a core or basic academic discipline? If not, should it be offered at all?
7. Is the size of the major and degree of specialization going to be such as to call into question the broadly based nature of the bachelor's degree itself?
8. What provisions have been made to ensure continued breadth in the major?

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