

THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGES
Office of the Chancellor
400 Golden Shore
Long Beach, California 90802-4275

Date: December 4, 1996

To: Presidents

From: Charles W. Lindahl
Interim Senior Vice Chancellor
Academic Affairs

Subject: Degree Programs Offered Through Special Sessions

At its November 1995 meeting, the Board of Trustees changed the Standing Orders of the Board to omit references to "external degree" programs while continuing to ensure that the CSU can offer degree programs on a self-support basis, through special sessions. This change allows campuses to use the fiscal and academic credit structure of special sessions for self-support degree programs that better serve adult students on campus and at distant sites through technology-mediated delivery of instruction. Except as specifically noted, the restrictions imposed by Executive Orders 166 and 466 on external degree programs will not apply to degree programs offered through special sessions.

Existing External Degree Programs. Campuses that have existing external degree programs may continue those programs without modification or may change the operation, so long as the change is consistent with policies and procedures governing degree programs in general and degree programs offered through special sessions. No new programs will be authorized specifically as external degree programs.

Establishment of Degree Programs Offered Through Special Sessions. If a campus wishes to offer a degree program through special sessions that it already offers as a regular state-supported program, it may do so, provided that (1) the program conforms to campus policies and procedures governing such programs, (2) the program meets all requirements pertaining to degree programs offered through special sessions, (3) the establishment of the program conforms to all relevant WASC policy and procedures (including WASC policy on substantive change and off-campus instruction, as appropriate), and (4) the campus notifies the Office of Extended Education and the Office of Academic Planning within the Chancellor's Office. It is not necessary to seek Chancellor's Office approval. If the academic requirements of the program as offered through special sessions will differ from the academic requirements of the program as offered through state support, the differences should be reviewed and approved through the standard campus curricular approval processes.

(continued)

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As is current practice, a degree program to be offered through special sessions that is *not* already offered by the campus as a regular state-supported program needs to go through the same review and approval processes at the campus, system, and state levels as a new state-supported degree program. (It must be approved by the Trustees for projection on the campus's Academic Plan, and the proposal for implementation is subject to review and comment by the Chancellor's Office and the California Postsecondary Education Commission and approval by the Chancellor.) We expect that this process will be swifter for degree programs to be offered solely through special sessions, as many resource issues are simpler to resolve for self-supporting programs than for state-supported programs, and we will make every effort to ensure that the process moves expeditiously.

Course listings and degree completion documents for degrees offered through special sessions need not be differentiated from those associated with state-supported programs.

Degree Programs Offered Through Special Sessions: Ongoing Policy. All degree programs offered through special sessions should maintain campus academic standards and provide appropriate academic and student support services. The programs should be under the supervision of full-time tenured or tenured-track campus faculty and have such faculty involved in an appropriate portion of the instruction.

All instruction offered for credit in degree programs should be approved under campus procedures used for regular state-supported programs, and academic policies governing degree programs offered through special sessions should be comparable to those governing state-supported programs. Existing regulations and procedures for special sessions should be followed in planning and offering degree programs through special sessions.

Further Information. Questions regarding degree programs offered through special sessions may be addressed to Dr. Edward McAleer, State University Dean, Extended Education (310-985-2817).