Updated November 1, 2016

Elevating Options and Concentrations to Full Degree Major Programs

As with proposals for new degree programs, elevating an option or concentration to a full degree program should reflect the needs of the students and the state, be broadly based, and demonstrate depth, relevancy and applicability to the real world of work. Board of Trustees guidelines prohibit proliferation of degrees and degree terminology.

An implementation proposal using the Elevating Options or Concentrations to a Full Degree Program Template is required when requesting to elevate a formal option, concentration, or emphasis to a full degree program. Each proposal must include:

1. A program overview, a description of the program's fit with the institutional mission or institutional learning outcomes, and a rationale for elevating the option or concentration at this time;

2. The proposed catalog copy including the program description, degree requirements and admission requirements, (including course catalog numbers, titles, course units), and admission requirements. For master's degrees, please also include catalog copy describing the culminating experience requirement(s);

3. A side-by-side comparison showing the course requirements of the existing degree major and concentration on one side and the proposed new major on the other;

4. A comprehensive assessment plan addressing all assessment elements and a curriculum map matrix showing where student learning outcomes are introduced (I), developed (D), and mastered (M);

5. Enrollment numbers in the option for the past three to five years;

6. Teach-out policy language to accommodate those students who will complete the original program with the option or concentration;

7. Evidence the current option will be discontinued once all existing students exit the program;

8. Documentation of the campus approval process with written evidence of continued administrative support to sustain the stand-alone program.

The elevation process requires system-level review and approval. To merit approval, the new degree program must not have significant overlap with the requirements of the existing full degree program from which it was derived. The existing concentration will need to be discontinued when the degree elevation is approved.

Executive Order No. 1071 http://www.calstate.edu/eo/EO-1071.html sets systemwide policy on establishing options, concentrations, and other subprograms.

Assigned Degree Program Code
Using a master list of degree programs and reporting codes, campuses report to the Chancellor's Office data on applications, enrollments, and degrees granted in degree programs. To ensure consistent record keeping, campuses use the same pairings of generic systemwide degree program titles and corresponding reporting codes.

The required curriculum for each CSU degree program title (and level) is roughly comparable across the system and reflects the Classification of Instructional Programs ("CIP") program definition for each CIP code. Campuses are allowed to use a slightly different campus-specific title, as long as it is reasonably similar to the official title. The program codes, however, remain the same across the system. The CSU Degrees Database has fields for the official "generic" CSU title and a campus-specific title.

One Degree Title—One Curriculum—One Code
Campuses are to maintain the degree requirements associated with a degree program approved by the Chancellor's Office; and substantive curricular changes are to be approved by the campus curriculum-approval process. To ensure the integrity of degree programs, each approved degree title is to be associated with only one set of curricular requirements. Requirements in addition to the major program may be achieved through the use of a subprogram (an option, concentration, or special emphasis), as noted in Executive Order 1071. An option, concentration, or special emphasis must constitute less than one half of the units required in the major core to insure that the program's student learning outcomes can be achieved by all enrolled students, regardless of subprogram pursued. For more information on the meaning, quality, and integrity of degrees, please see the Western Association of Schools and Colleges Handbook of Accreditation: http://www.wascsenior.org/resources/handbook-accreditation-2013/part-iii-wasc-quality-assurance/institutional-report/components-institutional-report/3-degree-programs-meaning-quality-and-integrity-degrees

Approved Official Systemwide Degree Titles and Reporting Codes
The official list of approved systemwide degree titles and their assigned CSU and CIP reporting codes may be found at:
http://www.calstate.edu/app/documents/CSU-Codes-to-CIP-2010def.pdf

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