

## **DRAFT (1/24/11)**

### Guidelines for Undergraduate Change of Major

There are no approved policies or procedures at the moment based on university policy. The proposed policy (AS 1443, Section 2.0) was voted down by the Academic Senate Dec 6, 2010. Until such time as there is an official policy, the following should be considered to be revised implementation Guidelines for Presidential Directive 2009-05. One of the roles of Undergraduate Studies (UGS) is curricular oversight, both for GE and major degree programs. Effective Spring 2011, UGS has approved these criteria for Change of Major. Additionally, UGS delegates to the ADRRC the authority to review departmental practice and policies in parallel to the way that the ADRRC reviews departmental practice and policies related to Probation and Disqualification in the Major. The text of AS 1443, Section 2.0, had been approved by the Instruction and Student Affairs Committee and that serves as the basis for the UGS policy:

*All designated "impacted" majors must define minimum prerequisite criteria that must be met for SJSU students to apply to declare or change into the major or minor. Non-impacted majors may also define minimum prerequisite criteria that must be met for SJSU students to apply to declare or change into the major or minor. Local or non-local status at time of admission plays no role in decisions after admission. Any pre-requisite criteria must be approved by the Office of Undergraduate Studies and posted on the University's Advising Hub website.*

No GPA requirement should be above 2.0 for non-impacted majors. For impacted majors it is OK to have change of major requirements above 2.0. Why the difference? The premise of impaction is that there is not enough capacity in the department to meet student demand, thus it is reasonable to have supplemental criteria. Those programs without impaction presumably have capacity for all the potential majors who arrive at their front door, so a "C or better" in any specific course or set of courses is a reasonable standard. [NOTE: "C or better" academic work is sufficient for any undergraduate degree; there can be no higher GPA required in any course or set of courses as part of an undergraduate degree program. GPA requirements at the time of admission or when changing major may be higher than 2.0, but such higher standards may not be applied to coursework required to complete a declared major. This may seem inconsistent, but it is not. One is an admission requirement and one is a degree requirement.]

Generally, a degree program should not have more than 9-12 units of coursework required prior to acceptance into the major (typically required to be completed within 24 units if necessary courses are available, in order to not slow progress to degree). Generally, these courses will be lower division gateway courses that have historically proven to be stumbling blocks to success in the degree program. Coupled with well designed criteria for probation and disqualification in the major, students will be far less likely to attain "super-senior" status prior to discovering that they really will be unlikely to complete that major.

The intent of these guidelines and those for probation and disqualification in the major is to assist students, particularly those who are "assigned undeclared," to find a major in which they can be

successful ASAP, and to improve retention and graduation rates across campus. [NOTE: Even if a change of major is approved at the department level, there are some university level Presidential Directive restrictions on change of major that may prevent final approval of the change. For example, high unit super-seniors may be denied at the university level when such a change will result in significantly more units to complete the new degree.]

### Framing Questions to Accompany the Guidelines for Change of Major

1. What are the criteria that will be used to determine if a student is eligible for change of major? Are these based on GPA (Overall GPA, SJSU Cum GPA, or (pre)major GPA), or are they based on performance in a specific set of courses?
2. If criteria are course based, how long will a student have to satisfy those criteria? Are repeats of courses allowed (beyond second tries that are subject to Grade Forgiveness).
3. Is there a departmental or college appeals process for denials of requests for change of major? [NOTE: The ADRRC will hear appeals as the committee of last resort. Student Fairness hearings are also a possibility (via the Ombudsman), but if the department has employed a fair impartial process using approved criteria for denials of change of major, reversals of departmental decisions ought to be very rare.]