

Academic Affairs
401 Golden Shore, 6th Floor
Long Beach, CA 90802-4210

www.calstate.edu

Ephraim P. Smith
Executive Vice Chancellor
and Chief Academic Officer
562-951-4710 / Fax 562-951-4986
Email esmith@calstate.edu

March 7, 2012

Code: AA-2012-04

MEMORANDUM

TO: Presidents
Provosts/Vice Presidents of Academic Affairs

FROM: Ephraim P. Smith 
Executive Vice Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer

SUBJECT: Dual Degree Restriction

Dual Degree Restriction

Consistent with policy established by our regional accreditor, the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), California State University campuses shall not enter into agreements to offer “dual degrees,” through which two or more institutions collaborate to provide a single degree program curriculum, the completion of which results in two or more degrees being awarded, one by each participating institution. For the purposes of CSU policy, it is important that two degrees not be awarded separately by two different institutions in recognition of essentially the same body of work; the title of the degrees awarded is not taken into consideration.

The WASC policy “Dual Degrees Offered Collaboratively by Two or More Institutions,” posted at: http://www.wascenior.org/findit/files/forms/Dual_Degrees_Policy.pdf, specifies:

WASC does not approve awarding dual degrees for substantially the same body of work. WASC/ACSCU-accredited institutions may not offer a dual degree program with a partnering institution for which the student is awarded two degrees of the same name for completion of what would normally be the course of study for one degree (e.g., a Master of Business Administration from one institution and a second MBA from another institution for the same set of 30 to 36 semester units that would normally lead to a single MBA). Partnering institutions may, however, offer

CSU Campuses
Bakersfield
Channel Islands
Chico
Dominguez Hills
East Bay

Fresno
Fullerton
Humboldt
Long Beach
Los Angeles
Maritime Academy

Monterey Bay
Northridge
Pomona
Sacramento
San Bernardino
San Diego

San Francisco
San José
San Luis Obispo
San Marcos
Sonoma
Stanislaus

Presidents

Provosts/Vice Presidents of Academic Affairs

March 7, 2012

Page 2

two degrees with the same name provided that the degree program complies with the provisions of this policy and the WASC/ACSCU Standards of Accreditation, that the degree program is sufficiently extensive and unique in design, and that it exceeds the amount of academic work typically required for a single degree.

Concurrent Degree Programs

This restriction does not apply to CSU concurrent degree programs, in which two different degree programs are coupled by the university for the purposes of offering complementary learning experiences. Students enroll simultaneously in both programs (such as a Master of Public Health and a Master of Social Work) and are awarded two separate degrees upon completion of the required curriculum.

Blended Degree Programs (“4 + 1”)

This restriction does not apply to CSU “blended” degree programs, which are designed to provide a seamless process through which students progress from undergrad to graduate status in an accelerated pathway. Blended programs allow students to begin working on master’s degree requirements before the related bachelor’s degree is completed. Both degrees may be completed in the same term, and students may be awarded the two separate degrees simultaneously (such as a BS in Mechanical Engineering and an MS in Mechanical Engineering) upon completion of the required curriculum.

For more information, please see:

<http://www.calstate.edu/app/policies/AA-2012-01Blendeddegrees4+1.pdf>

Joint Degree Programs

This restriction does not apply to joint degree programs, in which multiple institutions collaborate to offer the curriculum required to earn a single degree that is awarded jointly by the partner institutions. Education Code 66010.4(b) authorizes the California State University to award doctoral degrees jointly with the University of California or jointly with independent institutions of higher education in California. Title 5 section 40100.1 authorizes CSU campuses to develop cooperative curriculum leading to joint CSU bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral degrees (within degree granting authorizations established in California Education Code).

Double major

This restriction does not apply to double majors, in which a student earns one degree designation with two majors (Bachelor of Arts with Majors in History and Religious Studies). This is different from a student simultaneously pursuing two majors that each lead to a different type of bachelor’s degree (Bachelor of Arts degree in Business Administration and a Bachelor of Science in Biology). Campuses develop policies on double majors and on pursuing two distinct degree programs simultaneously.

Presidents
Provosts/Vice Presidents of Academic Affairs
March 7, 2012
Page 3

In all cases in which a student completes the requirements of two or more degree programs within one academic term, the student may be awarded the earned degrees during the same commencement ceremony. Please see Executive Order 971:

<http://www.calstate.edu/EO/EO-971.html>.

Questions regarding dual degrees and related issues may be directed to the offices of Academic Programs and Policy (562) 951-4672, Extended Education (562) 951-4795, or International Programs (562) 951-4790.

ES/clm

cc: Charles B. Reed, Chancellor
CSU Executive Staff
CSU Vice Presidents of Finance
CSU Associate Provosts/Associate Vice Presidents, Academic Affairs
CSU Deans of Extended Education
CSU Deans of Graduate Study
Mr. Eric Forbes, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Student Academic Support
Dr. Christine Mallon, State University Dean, Academic Programs and Policy
Dr. James Postma, Chair, Academic Senate, CSU
Ms. Sheila Thomas, State University Dean, Extended Education
Mr. Leo Van Cleve, Director, International Programs
Dr. Ron Vogel, Associate Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs