



Facilitating Graduation at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo

*Report to Chancellor's Office, CSU
December 2, 2005*

	Category	Present Status	Proposed Action
1	Reduction of Required Units	See attachment (based on template). Although significant progress has been made during the past few years in reducing total unit requirements at Cal Poly, some majors (mostly accredited, professional programs) still require more than the minimum 180 quarter units. In each case, written justification has been required, and further scrutiny is applied routinely during program review.	We will continue to explore opportunities for total unit reduction, with no diminution in educational quality, during program review and as other appropriate occasions arise.
2	Selective Reduction of Campus Graduation Requirements	<p>Our 2001 GE revision reduced the number of units in GE from 76 to 72 units. It also allowed for separate templates for engineering, liberal arts, and the remaining programs. The program allows for ample double-counting between GE, major, and support at the lower division level. In addition, the GE Committee recently approved double counting for upper-division Area F. Area F – Technology – is specific to Cal Poly and is meant to incorporate the unique characteristics of a polytechnic setting into the learning experience of all our graduates.</p> <p>The United States Cultural Pluralism requirement is also specific to Cal Poly. It can be met by</p>	The GE Committee will continue to work with programs to find ways to address their needs within Cal Poly's GE framework. This may include exploring opportunities to extend double counting. Double counting will also be a subject of further examination during the 2005-07 GE program review.

		courses in GE, in the major (as appropriate), and by transferable courses taken at the community college level.	
3	Emphasis on Graduation in Orientation for New Students	<p>Until recently, little emphasis was placed on timely graduation at Cal Poly. Because we have a large number of professional, polytechnic programs, many of which have high unit requirements, relatively few of our students have traditionally graduated in the number of years “specified” for the degree (4 or 5 years). It has become part of the culture that most students stay longer than the specified number of years at Cal Poly – a number of factors appear to contribute, such as outside work, extended internship opportunities, etc. We are already making efforts to encourage more timely graduation. For example, we have asked the PolyReps (student ambassadors) and others to refrain from making jokes about prolonged time-to-degree at Cal Poly during campus tours for prospective students and during orientation. Likewise, the slogan for a recent “Advising Week” was “Graduate on Time.”</p>	<p>We will continue to address this issue, communicating as opportunities arise (e.g., during program review) the need for faculty, staff, and students to take seriously the importance of timely graduation. We will consider ways of getting the message out to students as early as possible, even during the admissions process. Before the end of the 2005-06 academic year, we will revisit with faculty and staff advisors the question of whether students are being properly advised about unit loads (many students take loads that are not sufficient to allow graduation in 4 years, and there is evidence that some could handle more than they are being advised to take, especially if more demanding courses are balanced with less demanding courses in a particular quarter). At the same time, the focus on student success will be pre-eminent. There are plans to improve access to student advising, tutoring services, and “bottleneck” courses.</p>

4 5	Strengthened Support for GE and Life/Career Goal Clarification; Prominent Association of Career Outcomes with Degree Majors	<p>Cal Poly is unusual in requiring choice of major prior to entry. Our catalog and websites provide information about career choices associated with particular majors. Once they arrive on campus, students can seek further information from our Career Services. Those contemplating a change of major are encouraged to seek counseling from college advisors, faculty advisors, and the career counselors.</p> <p>Since most students enter Cal Poly as freshmen, we have been giving increasing attention to the freshman experience. For example, there are several college-themed residence halls that incorporate career exploration into their programming, as well as attention to how course choices in GE can lead to minors, which can further complement students' career opportunities. Since 2003, when a new residence complex that houses mostly sophomores was opened, a Sophomore Success Program has also been underway.</p>	<p>As they prepare materials for the next (2007-09) University Catalog, departments are being asked to review and, as appropriate, improve the manner in which they describe their majors, to help students make choices among them.</p> <p>A sub-committee of the Student Success Council is looking at ways of strengthening our student's first year experience. For the next three years, subject to demonstrated progress, a faculty member will be given assigned time to work on this initiative. In addition, as Cal Poly prepares to house on campus a larger percentage of its second-year students, starting in 2008, greater attention will be given to sophomores.</p>
6	Early Choice of Degree Major	Required on entry	Not applicable
7 8	Wide Promulgation of Roadmaps; Alignment of Class Schedules to Roadmaps	<p>Programs at Cal Poly provide "flowcharts" to all their students, in one form or another, typically based on degree completion in 4 years (or 5 years, if applicable). There has been some hesitancy in providing flowcharts for longer periods, since this might be viewed as sanctioning or even encouraging more extended time-to-degree. In many cases, flowcharts have been examined during program review in an effort to improve the chances that implicit and explicit promises can be</p>	<p>We will continue to examine the nature, availability, and use of flowcharts during program review, paying attention (for example) to whether separate flowcharts are available for transfer students. We will also continue in our efforts to identify and eliminate bottleneck courses.</p>

		met. We have also been attempting to identify “bottleneck” courses and ways of alleviating the problems they cause for students.	
9 10	Mandatory Individual Study Plans; Use of Study Plans in Planning Class Schedules	Although a portion of our students now receive automated degree tracking on a quarterly basis through “PolyProgress,” currently we do not require study plans that define a specific path to the degree except in special cases (e.g., when a student is in academic difficulty and is placed on “contract”). Cal Poly currently lacks the capability to base course scheduling on cumulated study plans. In their scheduling, some programs use survey information on student demand for courses, and we are encouraging others to consider this approach, at least until we are able to use study plans for this purpose.	We recently began implementation of the CMS Student Administration (SA) module. As we learn more about its functionality, we will explore the best ways of using it. In doing so, we will seek to learn from the experiences of campuses that are further ahead than ourselves in SA implementation.
11	Adoption of Strategies for Student Success and Learning Support	In addition to a variety of efforts by other groups in the departments and colleges, for more than a year a subcommittee of our Student Success Council has been looking at ways of expanding/improving the support that we offer for student learning. We had already given greater prominence to “Supplementary Instruction” that is associated with particular sections of courses in science and math, and is offered for academic credit; then (this year) we significantly expanded our “Study Session” program and, based on preliminary assessments, expect to continue along this path. Technology –mediated learning systems are being used in some fields, including writing skills.	In winter 2006 we will pilot a new approach in which science and math faculty will identify struggling students by the third or fourth week of the quarter, and we will intrusively advise these students to attend newly established study sessions. The existing Student Success Council subcommittee will continue to explore opportunities to provide additional learning support, including possibly the re-establishment in the library of a “learning center” (such a center existed in the distant past but was closed due to budget cuts). Our newly-appointed Chief Information Officer has expressed his intention to increase the university’s focus during the coming years on the use of technology in instruction.

12	Enforcement of Limits on Drops, Withdrawals, Incompletes;	The enforcement of limits on drops, withdrawals, and incompletes is not currently viewed as a significant issue at Cal Poly. From a student success perspective, enforcement must be applied with some discretion, to allow for genuine hardships. Cal Poly's existing policy on course repetitions is relatively permissive, although the number of units that may be repeated in order to replace prior grades is limited to 20.	The Academic Senate (AS) Instruction Committee will be asked by the end of 2005-06 to revisit Cal Poly's policy on course repetitions
13	Limits on Course Repetitions		
14	Campus Provision of Rich CMS Environment	CMS Student Administration module is currently being implemented	
15	Strong, Timely Major Advisement	A few majors require mandatory advising for all students; most require it for students having academic difficulties. The Advising Council has discussed, but is not currently in favor of, requiring mandatory advising for all students, partly because of what is viewed as an inadequate number of professional advisors as well as a lack of adequate training for faculty advisors.	The Advising Council and possibly the AS Instruction Committee will be asked by the end of 2005-06 to consider the desirability, means, and feasibility of strengthening advising in the majors.
16	Frequent Use of Degree Audits;	Currently, students are advised to request a senior evaluation at least three quarters prior to their expected graduation date. However, our automated degree audit system "PolyProgress" is currently available to only a limited number of students and often provides incomplete information due primarily to delays in entering transfer equivalencies. It is difficult for us to keep up with the demand for manual audits, which are provided in advance of graduation and under certain other circumstances only.	Significant efforts are currently being made to overcome problems in the implementation of PolyProgress and to speed up the delivery of complete and accurate degree audits. Audits for students who enter in fall 2006 and beyond will be prepared using the PeopleSoft SA module. Working with the CMS Implementation Team, the Advising Council and the AS Instruction Committee will be asked by the end of fall 06 to consider whether and how we might require mandatory advisement for
17	Mandatory Degree Audits not later than 105 quarter units;		
18	Mandatory Advisement as Student Approaches/Exceeds		

	Minimum Required Units		all students who are placed on academic probation, change major, or approach/exceed minimum required units.
19	Development and Use of "Dashboard Indicators"		In collaboration with other entities as necessary (e.g., the Academic Senate, the Instructional Department Heads' Council), by the end of spring 06, the Vice Provosts and the Director of Institutional Planning & Analysis will complete an exploration of the development and use of "dashboard indicators".
20	Review by CSU Academic Peers		Cal Poly will embrace and facilitate visits by academic peers to assess progress toward facilitating graduation, at the earliest possible date.
21 22	Provide the Board of Trustees with periodic reports; Provide appropriate funding support	The high priority attached to "Student Success" at Cal Poly was underscored by President Baker at the 2002 Fall Convocation, resulting in the establishment of our Student Success Council which (among other things) continues to actively pursue ways of facilitating graduation. Budget allocations have reflected this emphasis, with additional funds given to address "bottleneck" courses, to support GE, to expand academic support services, to implement PolyProgress, to support the Advising Council, etc.	Subject to funding constraints, the Interim Provost will continue to encourage and entertain requests in support of efforts to facilitate graduation, and will expect deans and others with control over resources to do the same.

Attachment: Total Unit Requirements at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo (November 2005)

1. Undergraduate Programs Requiring More than 180 Quarter Units

	Major Units		GE Units	Free Electives	Total Units	Accred. Prog?	Year Program Reviewed/ Units reduced?	Next Program Review
	Major Units	(Units also Satisfy GE)						
College of Agriculture								
BS Agricultural Science	129-130	(16)	56	6-7	192	No	1998-99/no	2007-08
BS Agric Systems Mgt	131	(20)	52	0	183	No	2002-03/no	2008-09
BS BioResource & Ag Engr	156	(36)	36	0	192	Yes	2002-03/no	2008-09
BS Environmental Hort Sci	140	(24)	48	0	188	No	2004-05/no	2009-10
BS Food Science	138	(24)	48	0	186	No	2003-04/no	2008-09
BS Forestry & Natural Res	136	(16)	56	0	192	Yes	2002-03/no	2007-08
BS Nutrition	136-142	(28)	44	0-6	186	Yes	2003-04/no	2008-09
College Arch & Environ Des								
BS Architectural Engr	159	(28)	44	0	203	Yes	2002-03/no	2008-09
B. Architecture	175	(20)	52	0	227	Yes	2004-05/no	2009-10
BS Construction Mgt	142	(16)	56	0	198	Yes	2001-02/no	2007-08
BLA Landscape Arch	161	(16)	56	8	225	Yes	2001-02/no	2007-08
College of Engineering								
BS Aeronautical Engr	156	(32)	40	0	196	Yes	2002-03/no	2008-09
BS Biomedical Engr (new 05)	158	(32)	40	0	198	Pending	--	
BS Civil Engineering	156	(32)	40	0	196	Yes	2002-03/no	2008-09
BS Computer Engineering	153	(32)	40	0	193	Yes	2002-03/no	2008-09
BS Computer Science	141	(32)	40	5	186	Yes	2002-03/no	2008-09
BS Electrical Engineering	153	(32)	40	0	193	Yes	2002-03/no	2008-09
BS Environmental Engr	156	(32)	40	0	196	Yes	2002-03/no	2008-09
BS General Engineering	144-145	(32)	40	9-10	194	No	--	2006-07
BS Industrial Engineering	156	(32)	40	0	196	Yes	2002-03/no	2008-09
BS Manufacturing Engr	156	(32)	40	0	196	Yes	2002-03/no	2008-09
BS Materials Engineering	154	(32)	40	0	194	Yes	2002-03/no	2008-09
BS Mechanical Engineering	159	(32)	40	0	199	Yes	2002-03/no	2008-09
BS Software Engr (new in 03)	156	(36)	36	0	192	Pending	--	2008-09
College of Liberal Arts								
BFA Art and Design	118	(4)	68	0	186	Yes	2000-01/no	2005-06
BS Liberal Studies	143	(24)	48	0	191	No	--	2007-08

26 programs

2. Undergraduate Degree Programs at 180 Quarter Units, but which include fewer than 15 units of free electives.

A. Number of Programs: 24

B. The campus does not intend to ask faculty to increase free electives at this time. In order to facilitate the decrease of total units to 180, a compromise was reached that allowed high unit majors to reduce free electives from the 9 units previously required (although not consistently enforced).