California State University, Maritime Academy
Academic Senate

Recommendation to Amend Title 5 to Re-establish Appropriate Unit Limits for Engineering Degrees

RESOLVED: that the Academic Senate of the California State University, Maritime Academy support Academic Senate of the California State University (ASCSU) Resolution AS-3158-13/AA, which asks that Title 5 be amended to establish a limit of 132 semester units for engineering degree programs, as this limit better accommodates the unit-intensive needs of engineering programs without jeopardizing the integrity of existing general education and practical training requirements; and be it further

RESOLVED: that the Academic Senate of the California State University, Maritime Academy urge that when mandated unit reductions to any high-unit degree program—not just engineering—are considered in the future, the impact of such reductions on the quality of the entire baccalaureate degree be carefully considered; and be it further

RESOLVED: that the Academic Senate of the California State University, Maritime Academy urge the Board of Trustees not to sacrifice intellectual breadth for the sake of a standardized unit ceiling.

RATIONALE:\(^2\): Title 5 has been amended to remove the exception that allowed engineering degree programs more latitude in unit limits, thereby requiring them to meet the same 120/180 standard as other programs. A phase-in plan for all high-unit majors was put into place by the Office of the Chancellor. In order to reduce required units engineering programs across the CSU have enacted strategies such as adding/blending course objectives and double-counting units in the major simultaneously to satisfy general education (GE) requirements. Thus far, it has been reported that an average of 15 units of double counting of GE and engineering major requirements is occurring among programs system-wide. In addition, campuses are instituting waivers and substitutions of GE requirements and reducing elective options in the major. In spite of these efforts, Provosts, Deans, Department Chairs, and faculty across the system continue to report that programs are having a great deal of difficulty reducing the number of units to the new level.

The faculty of the California Maritime Academy feel that intellectual breadth is vital for the success of our graduates, our industry stakeholders, our state and our nation. This intellectual breath is best achieved when general education subjects are taught by GE faculty and we do a disservice to our students when we ask engineering faculty to teach those subjects through double-counting of units.

In conclusion, limiting engineering programs to 120 semester or 180 quarter units is untenable without significant sacrifices impacting the quality of the programs, as well as the integrity and goals of existing GE and practical training support programs. Therefore, it is appropriate to re-institute the exception to unit limits for engineering programs that existed previously in Title 5, consistent with the precedent set by other high-unit degree programs. To this end, the Academic Senate of the California Maritime Academy requests that the Office of the Chancellor work for the amendment to Title 5, accordingly.

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1 Unanimously approved by the Academic Senate of the California State University (ASCSU) on January 23, 2014
2 Adapted from ASCSU Resolution AS-3158-13/AA
Distribution List:
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