

Action Item
California State University, Dominguez Hills
Academic Senate Resolution
EPC 12-15
m/s/p
October 10, 2012

Resolution Regarding CSU Board of Trustees' Committee on Educational Policy, September 2012
Agenda Item 3, Upper-Division General Education and Degree Completion, Information (Amended)¹

Resolved: That the California State University, Dominguez Hills (CSU-DH) Academic Senate reaffirm the faculty's primary responsibility for the curriculum, a responsibility based on the principle of academic freedom, and noted in the CSU Board of Trustees Statement on Collegiality and the American Association of University Professors' Principles Statement on Collegiality; and be it further

Resolved: That the CSU-DH Academic Senate condemn the categorical disregard for consultation in the manner in which the proposed requirement change was developed, formalized and made public as a board agenda item without adequate and timely consultation with, or indeed even notification to CSU faculty governance; and be it further

Resolved: That the CSU-DH Academic Senate express deep concern over the disregard for potential impacts to the competitive value of CSU degrees that may result from these hasty and ill-planned reductions to unit count without full consideration for curricular integrity as related to students' future prospects for graduate school, professional accreditation and career; and be it further

Resolved: That the CSU-DH Academic Senate strongly object to the proposal in its current form, and urge postponement of this proposal until modifications can be made in consultation with the appropriate ASCSU committees and campus Academic Senates. These modifications should take into account the following:

1. The timelines for review of degrees in the Summary of the proposal are too short to match the calendar of academic program review processes on each campus. The proposed timeline should be extended.
2. Language should be added to an executive order implementing the Title V changes that urges programs to maintain the breadth of the degree by maintaining a strong general education emphasis in the required coursework for the bachelor's degree.
3. The provisions for chancellor's action to reduce unit requirements on non-complying programs should be excluded.
4. Evidence should be gathered to determine if increased student access, improved graduation rates, protection of academic quality, and providing affordable education, stated objectives of the proposal, will be achieved with the implementation of the proposal.

Resolved: That this resolution be distributed to the Board of Trustees, the chancellor, campus presidents, the ASCSU, and CSU campus academic senate chairs.

Rationale

The Board of Trustees Educational Policy Committee September agenda item "Upper-Division General Education and Degree Completion, Information (Amended)" is a proposal to require, where feasible, all four-year bachelor's degree programs to require no more than 120 semester or 180 quarter units to complete. The item started out as a proposal to eliminate the upper division general education

requirement for CSU undergraduate degrees. The initial proposal was put on the BOT agenda with no prior notice to the ASCSU, and no consultation with faculty. After significant concern expressed by statewide and local faculty governance bodies and campus faculty about the lack of consultation and the potentially significant impact of the proposal on curricula throughout the CSU, the BOT proposal was modified and sent to the ASCSU during its plenary meeting on Friday, September 14, 2012.

The CSU-DH Academic Senate is committed to active partnership in shared governance as it upholds the principle of the faculty's primary responsibility for the curriculum, a responsibility noted in the CSU Board of Trustees Statement on Collegiality and the American Association of University Professors' Principles Statements. Of major concern in carrying out that responsibility is the quality of the degree. Because of its potentially significant impact on the nature and content of degrees throughout the CSU system, the proposal to bring all degrees down to 120 units wherever feasible should be thoroughly evaluated by faculty before action by the Board of Trustees.

The CSU-DH Academic Senate is opposed to several aspects of the amended proposal. First, the timelines for compliance with the 120/180 unit goal do not allow campus program faculty sufficient time to evaluate their required coursework against the benchmark unit level set in the BOT proposal or adequate time for the appropriate faculty governance committees to review proposed program changes. The timelines should be extended.

Second, there is no re-affirmation of the CSU commitment to educational breadth by urging programs to maintain a strong GE component. A significant path to reducing units-to-degree outlined in the Summary is a reduction in system-wide general education (GE) requirements. GE has long been an indicator of the CSU commitment to provide an education that goes beyond specific major requirements or career skills. Through GE students are introduced to diverse ways of looking at problems and understanding the world, a skill of lasting value in an interdependent and globalized world.

Third, the provision for chancellor's action to reduce unit requirements on non-complying programs is inconsistent with long-recognized tenets of shared governance. Faculty's primary responsibility for the curriculum is well-established in CSU and AAUP statements. Providing for the chancellor to act to reduce unit requirements for specific degrees is a violation of academic freedom and undermines the principle that faculty, as experts in their field, are best qualified to determine the appropriate level and extent of knowledge needed to earn a university degree.

Fourth, the CSU-DH Academic Senate support efforts to improve access, improve graduation rates, protect academic quality, and provide affordable education. Yet the proposal does not provide evidence that the changes will bring about these objectives. Therefore, we request that data be compiled to evaluate the likelihood that the proposed changes will meet the objectives, or if other measures might more effectively meet the objectives.

¹ Resolution is based, in part, on language contained in resolutions passed by the Academic Senates of Sonoma State University and CSU, Stanislaus.