

Revision of Section 2.43.11.120 of the Statute on University Requirements for the Baccalaureate Degree

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Governors revise section 2.43.11.120 of the Statute on University Requirements for the Baccalaureate Degree. This section is related to the number of credits required for concurrent bachelor's degrees. The Senate Policy Committee reviewed this recommendation and recommended it to the full Academic Senate. The full Academic Senate approved it at the October 6, 2021 plenary session with no objections. This change is effective immediately.

Background

According to the Board of Governors statute 2.43.11, a student who wishes to simultaneously receive two different bachelor's degrees (concurrent degrees) from Wayne State University must complete a minimum of 150 semester credit hours, in addition to completing all University, College/School, department and program requirements for each degree. In contrast, students who opt for double majors only have to complete 120 semester credit hours.

The Problem:

Students cannot always double-major in fields of their choice due to the variety of degree codes used at the university. For example, if students opt for double majors such as English and History (both BA degrees) they can elect both majors under the same degree code and are held to a minimum of 120 credits. However, students with a BA in Sociology and a BS in Public Health have different degree codes and so cannot opt for a double major designation. Instead, students who choose two majors with different degree codes fall under concurrent degree policy and must earn 150 credits. There are also specialized degrees in certain colleges and schools that cannot be easily combined with any other major (BA or BS), such as the Bachelors of Public Affairs (BPA) or the Bachelors of Fine Arts (BFA). While many students in STEM fields may reach 150 credits with two majors automatically (because they have chosen high-credit majors), other students in less credit-heavy fields find it prohibitive to opt for two majors in our current context, due to the fact that their choice of majors forces them into the concurrent degree designation (rather than the double major designation).

The Core Issue:

Depending on the two majors they choose, students face different minimum credit requirements. Students who choose majors that are "double majors" are required to complete a minimum of 120 credits whereas students who choose two majors that are "concurrent" degrees are required to complete a minimum of 150 credits. Some departments have both BA and BS degrees (so that students can choose either and work around this situation) but others only have a BA or BS. A few departments only have specialized degrees. That students are held to different graduation requirements based on their choices of majors is inequitable. Students who opt into two majors should be met with the same credit requirements, regardless of how their degree is coded.

Current Statute Language Regarding Concurrent Degrees:

2.43.11.120 Complete a minimum of 150 semester credit hours.

According to the Board of Governors statute 2.43.11, “A student who wishes to simultaneously receive two different bachelor's degrees from Wayne State University must satisfy the following minimum requirements: Complete a minimum of 150 semester credit hours (2.43.11.120).

Proposed Statute Revision:

Eliminate Section 2.43.11.120

We propose that the 150-credit requirement be removed from concurrent degree policy. In practice this means deleting section 2.43.11.120 of the Board of Governors statute 2.43.11. This change of university policy would not disturb any academic requirement or standard associated with either major or degree: all department-, college- and university-level requirements for each major/degree would stay intact.