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DAVID S. SPENCE  
EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR  
CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER

## MEMORANDUM

Code: AA-2004-31  
Date: August 13, 2004

To: Academic Council  
Chairs, CSU Campus Academic Senates

From: David Spence *David S.*  
Executive Vice Chancellor

*David O. McNeil*  
David McNeil  
Chair, Academic Senate CSU

Subject: Systemwide Lower-Division Transfer Patterns by Major

At its July 2004 meeting, the CSU Board of Trustees modified Title 5 to encourage community college students who wish eventually to transfer to the CSU to choose efficient patterns of classes. The central purpose is to help those students to avoid the now-common pattern of accumulating units well beyond what they need in order to accomplish their educational goals. We are writing now to inform you of a large and very significant project, based on that decision. Its goal, for the coming academic year, is to identify a pattern of lower-division course work to be taken in the community college for each of twenty-six high-demand majors, so that students who take the recommended path may be given priority admission status when they transfer to a CSU campus.

The Lower-Division Transfer Patterns by Major project to which we now alert you is sponsored jointly by the Academic Senate CSU and the CSU Chancellor's Office and includes a process for coming to agreement on a transfer pattern for each designated major. (For this purpose, "major" is defined in Attachment 3.) Faculty representatives from twenty-six baccalaureate majors will be asked to meet; each group will have one representative from each CSU campus that offers that particular major. Each group will be responsible for defining for the CSU system the recommended lower-division transfer pattern for that major.

Because faculty have primary responsibility for degree requirements and the curriculum, it is important that the faculty of each major have the primary voice in the selection of their representatives. Normally this will be done by departments or programs through their usual governance or curricular processes. (Provosts and Campus Senate Executive Committees should agree on other appropriate processes on each campus where majors do not coincide with departmental structures; it is vital that the faculty who have primary responsibility for the curriculum in this program take leadership for each project.)

Faculty representatives will attend a series of statewide meetings of their major group and will be empowered to join with their counterparts from the other campuses in designating at least 45 semester units of lower-division course work that will count toward graduation with that major at all CSU campuses offering it. In most cases there will be two meetings, of a day and a half in duration. Initial agreements developed at the first statewide meeting will be taken back to campus program faculty for consultation; final agreement at a subsequent meeting will require no further statewide or campus ratification. This process has worked well in previous projects.

The Chancellor's Office will support travel costs. You will be copied on all correspondence with the campus representatives.

Please find attached three items.

- First, please find a statement that provides more detailed description of the activities of the Lower-Division Transfer Patterns by Major project.
- Second, you will find a list of the twenty-six majors identified by the Chancellor's Office as initial best candidates for establishing systemwide lower-division transfer patterns. These were chosen principally because they are high-frequency major choices of incoming community college transfer students; for most, we believe there is also a commonality of degree requirements across CSU campuses. Other majors may be added in subsequent years.
- Third, we enclose a timeline that begins with a response by each campus Provost/Vice President providing us with the names of and contact information for designated disciplinary representatives from each campus.

We hope that you will join us in encouraging your campus representatives to work with energy and good spirit in a process that we expect will serve the people of California well. If you have questions or concerns, please contact David Spence at 562/951-4710 or David McNeil at 562/951-4014.

#### Attachments

c: CSU Presidents  
Chancellor Charles B. Reed  
Associate Vice Chancellor Keith Boyum  
Assistant Vice Chancellors and Deans, Academic Affairs

## **Systemwide Lower-Division Transfer Patterns by Major**

To begin the project, we are asking faculty members from each CSU campus to come together by major to identify 45 to 60 semester units (68 to 90 quarter units) of lower-division courses that will satisfy graduation requirements for that major at all CSU campuses. For these purposes, "major" may refer to a closely related group of degree majors, options, and/or concentrations. Majors are identified by program code, not title.

The typical pattern will begin with the completion of lower-division course work that satisfies CSU General Education-Breadth requirements and the CSU's United States History, Constitution, and American Ideals requirement. It will continue with six or more units of designated lower-division course work that will meet graduation unit requirements at all CSU campuses offering that major program. Additional semester units that will apply to the baccalaureate degree for that major at a particular CSU campus—for a total of 60 to 70 lower-division units—will subsequently be designated by faculty responsible for the major at that campus. It is not required that six of the units be "major units," only that the 45 lower-division units accepted all reduce the number of units left to take for the degree. A major with no lower-division requirements can agree on general education and six units of unrestricted electives. In all instances, the resulting transfer course patterns should be at least roughly comparable to lower-division course work taken by CSU first-time freshmen.

In most cases, we anticipate, it will not be necessary to identify particular courses to meet general education requirements, but instead only to specify that students should complete all lower-division general education and requirements in U.S. history, Constitution, and American ideals. Only for high-unit, highly sequential majors do we anticipate that it will be necessary to limit the selection of courses meeting general education requirements. For most majors, therefore, the key task will be to identify six or more units of course work beyond general education that will count for the major. Similarly, many of the campus-specific units may be designated as unrestricted electives if a major has six or fewer units of lower-division course work.

If agreement is reached prior to the scheduled adjournment of a meeting, the remaining time may be used to discuss other curricular matters of importance to the major across the system.

Clear information can support efficient course choices by community college students, and in turn such choices can lead these students to the baccalaureate degree in fewer total units. Speedier progress to the baccalaureate should allow the California State University to serve a larger total number of students, as graduates leave room for new students. It should be emphasized that the current minimum requirement for the baccalaureate degree is not changed by this project, which is designed to reduce the number of "excess" units taken by many students.