

CERJ Advice on Suspension of Undergraduate Majors November 19, 2009

Background

The Committee on Elections, Rules and Jurisdiction has been asked by Executive Director Gina Anderson for advice concerning a proposal by the College of Engineering to suspend further enrollment in the major in Computational Applied Science.

Advice

Based on information obtained by CERJ from the Office of the Provost, the administration's policy on suspension of enrollment in majors is based on a document entitled "Universitywide Review Policies for Academic Programs, Academic Units, and Research Units," commonly referred to as the "Compendium."

<http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/senate/resources/Compendium.pdf>

The relevant section of the Compendium is the following.

"II.A. Undergraduate Degree Programs

With the exception of undergraduate degree programs involving a title unique to the campus, all actions involving undergraduate degree programs are carried out on the nine established campuses. That is, creating a new undergraduate degree program, changing the name of an existing undergraduate degree program, and consolidating, transferring, or discontinuing an existing undergraduate degree program are campus decisions and there is no systemwide review of them. If approved by the responsible divisional Academic Senate committee and supported by the campus administration, a proposed action involving an undergraduate degree program is implemented."

Two points are of note. First, the campus is responsible for "all actions involving undergraduate degree programs." Although suspension of enrollment in a major is not mentioned specifically, it is an action involving an undergraduate degree program and hence is a campus responsibility. Second, the action must be "approved by the responsible divisional Academic committee."

The local implementation of the suspension process is reported by the Office of the Provst as being based on Policy and Procedure Manual 200-25, entitled "Establishment or Revision of Degree Programs." The following is the relevant portion of PPM 200-25.

“4. Approval from the school or college Executive Committee and the recommendation of the dean is forwarded to the divisional Senate office for transmittal to the Undergraduate Council and the Committee on Planning and Budget.

Copies of these approvals and recommendations are also sent to the Vice Provost--Undergraduate Studies and to the chairs of the Executive Committees of the undergraduate colleges to comment on potential effects to programs within their colleges.

5. The Committee on Planning and Budget submits advisory comments to the Undergraduate Council.

6. The Undergraduate Council reviews the proposal and can approve the program on behalf of the Divisional Academic Senate.

7. The Undergraduate Council approval is referred to the Vice Provost--Undergraduate Studies for comment and transmittal to the Council of Deans and Vice Chancellors (CODVC). A copy of the Undergraduate Council approval is sent to the Chair of the Divisional Academic Senate for the information of the Executive Council.”

It is clear that since the Executive Committee and Dean of the College of Engineering have forwarded the proposal to the Senate office, it is the Undergraduate Council (UC) and the Committee on Planning and Budget (CPB) who should evaluate it, with CPB advising UC, which in turn “can approve the program on behalf of the Divisional Academic Senate.” Given what is stated in PPM 200-25 and the Compendium, approval by the Undergraduate Council is required for any action involving undergraduate degree programs.

CERJ is concerned that this procedure may not be followed in all cases. In the case at hand, there is evidence that the major has already been suspended. The following URL points to a Web page posted by the Office of Admissions.

http://admissions.ucdavis.edu/counselors/academic_updates.cfm

It reads: “**Suspended Majors.** In 2008, the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences elected to suspend the Individual Major program, and new proposals will not be accepted until further notice. Computational Applied Science, B.S., College of Engineering, remains suspended indefinitely. Nature and Culture, A.B., College of Letters and Science, has been suspended (effective for new applicants fall 2010). Statistics, A.B., College of Letters and Science, is in the process of being discontinued. Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degrees in Statistics will remain available with options in Applied Statistics and Computational Statistics.”

Given that the approval process has not been completed, the statement about the suspension of admissions to the Computational Applied Science major should be corrected. Moreover, it should be ascertained whether the other suspensions were properly approved, and further corrections should be made if needed.

CERJ advises that, given that suspension of admission to majors is governed by PPM 200-25, the Office of the Provost is not entitled to suspend any major until the entire process outlined in PPM 200-25 has been completed.

CERJ also recommends that PPM 200-25 be amended to specify that it applies specifically to the suspension of admission to majors.

Addendum, February 12, 2012. The advice that “approval by the Undergraduate Council is required for any action involving undergraduate degree programs” was intended to be specific to the case of suspension of admissions to majors and not to be of general application. The sections of the Policy and Personnel Manual and the Compendium were cited solely with respect to those parts relevant to suspension.