

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY
Report on Standard GPA Calculation for Major Qualification Policies

To: Academic Senate Santa Cruz Division

One of the most important choices a student can make is his or her major program of study. Students, advisers, and the various major qualification policies have to work together to make sure that students invest their efforts in the right classes at the right time. CEP wants to make sure that faculty, advisers, and students have the best possible information in the clearest possible way to facilitate that important choice.

Many major qualification procedures require a specific Grade Point Average (GPA) performance on a set of classes. Principles of fairness require that this GPA be a good predictor of success in the major, that the set of classes over which the GPA is made be available to both students who began their studies at UCSC and those who transferred in, and that the GPA calculation is easy and fast. Students who unknowingly join the wrong major, or who are prevented from joining the right major, can impact UCSC retention rates, graduation rates, and measures of diversity. CEP found that the great variety of methods for GPA qualification run counter to the interests of our students and our university.

Seeking fairness, consistency, and transparency, CEP members have strongly agreed that departments and programs that use GPA should all use the same tool to reach this calculation. Using Senate GPA regulations and the Academic Information System (AIS), the Registrar's Office can display a student's qualifying GPA in a particular major, based on a list of qualifying courses and the student's record. This will provide functionality for students and advisers to easily view the student's GPA in the considered major

CEP has already alerted each department that has a GPA requirement that the campus will be implementing a new standard calculation for GPA next year. Several departments and programs chose to move to this GPA calculation for their 2013-2014 catalog year even though it won't be required until the 2014-2015 catalog year. We have heard from very large majors that assure us that this change, while startling at first encounter, will lead to fairness, ease of advising, and appropriate selection of qualified students.

For clarification, in the AIS calculation, W, NP and P grades are not counted in the GPA. In addition, no mention of course repetition will be needed, because Senate Regulation 9.4.1 will handle this, and only colleges will make enrollment decisions based on course repetition. If a student has taken courses more than once due to receipt of a D or F, for the first 15 credits of repeated work, only the last grade recorded shall be computed in the student's GPA. If the 15-credit limit is exceeded, the GPA shall be based on all additional letter grades assigned and credits attempted. Departments and programs may require students to take all major qualification classes for a grade. Further, departments and programs may wish to take into account non-passing work (D/F/NP) in major qualification courses by requiring students to complete most of their preparatory work on the first try, but are required to allow for at least one or two failing grades. Moving forward, as departments and programs prepare for this change, and after

examination of the effect of the new GPA calculation, departments and programs may present data supporting raising or lowering the qualification GPA by a small amount. The committee welcomes future proposals and any associate data for justification of a specific GPA requirement.

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Mark Anderson

Pamela Hunt-Carter, *ex officio*

Lora Bartlett

Ronnie Lipschutz, Provost Representative

Olof Einarsdottir

Steven Sweat, NTSF Representative

Edward Warburton

Max Hufft, Student Representative (SUA)

James Wilson

Kayla Oh, Student Representative (SUA)

James Zachos

Tracy Larrabee, Chair

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