

Academic Policies Committee

Meeting: Tuesday, November 7, 2023 at 4 pm

Attendees: Keith Goyne, Keith Thompson, Susan Sumner, Dan Thorp, Kimberly Smith, Michel Pleimling, Jennifer Pike (minutes)

1. Minutes from the October 24, 2023, meeting of the Academic Policies Committees were approved
2. Revision of policy 6305 section 2.1- charge from CUSP - continuation of discussion
 - a. **The Committee concludes that statement 3b (“upon attempting 72 semester credits ... students must be enrolled in a degree-granting program”) still has value and should be retained in the revised policy.**
 - b. Understanding our charge: CUSP wants us to find common criteria for everyone as much as possible. There may be some specific ones for different degrees, but we need to answer the question regarding meaningful common criteria for every student at Virginia Tech.

Consider: in-major GPA benchmark

- Is it meaningful to students?
 - In-major GPA, may or may not include:
 - Core requirements
 - Foundational courses
 - Applied content material
 - What can be identified as ‘common to all’?
- Is it manageable for colleges and the university to track in-major GPA consistently and adequately?
 - In DARS and Banner, etc.
 - Should we set parameters for some standardization about what is/isn’t part of the in-major GPA, even if it is not universally defined?
 - Some standardization might benefit students
 - Students change majors and move across the university
 - Would benefit from a student and academic advising perspective
 - Advising may happen outside of colleges (transitional advising)

- Colleges and programs need ability to require what is relevant for their degrees, too

- What could be used to calculate in-major GPA?
 - Every course which is common to every student in a major, including Pathways courses that are required for a major
 - Taking electives that help raise overall GPA is a tool that is also used to raise in-major GPA
 - Many programs don't have an in-major GPA requirement as part of the Satisfactory Academic Progress statement
 - This can result in issues at graduation time
 - In-major GPA is not being monitored effectively across campus

- What if we monitor in-major GPA as part of progress toward degree?
 - Standardize this to follow the progress of students
 - Expectation that each major defines the in-major GPA and monitors it
 - Most aspirational institutions that Keith G. looked at only have GPA requirement, no 6305 equivalent.

Committee members agree to include in 2.1 two items: (1) degree-program at 72 hours (current statement 3b) and (2) monitor progress through in-major GPA. The determination of courses used to calculate the in-major GPA will be left to the faculty in the different programs.

c. Progress to degree statements at departmental level

Analysis of the various progress to degree statements reveals the following broad categories:

1. Number of courses taken at a certain time with a certain grade.
2. Overall GPA requirement (2.0-3.0) or in-major GPA (2.0-3.0)
3. # of courses to be taken in the major each year
4. Restriction on number of attempts to repeat
5. After attempting a specified number of credits a student should have completed a certain number of in-major courses

What is meaningful? What isn't helping monitor student progress?

#2:

If there is no alignment with university graduation requirements (overall and in-major GPA of 2.0 needed for graduation), then this could potentially open the university for lawsuits

Pre-professional programs – is a higher GPA needed to get into grad school
Accreditation? Restricted major? - these considerations do not belong in a progress
toward degree statement

Higher GPAs were intended for restricted majors only, but many majors now use it.

The committee agrees that statements in category #2 are inconsistent with other university policies and should therefore not be allowed.

#3:

Difficult to implement across the university as a requirement common to all
This type of requirements plays a role monitoring students in one major who are really
wanting to be in another major

Could one combine #3 and #5 as both target in-major courses?

#4:

The committee agrees that statements in category #4 are inconsistent with the university's repeat course policy and should therefore not be allowed.

#1:

Departmental PTD statements could include statements of this type for just two or
three indicator classes. Examples are found in Engineering and other Colleges.

We list classes, but can/should we list grades required as a prerequisite for other
classes? A grade is encoded in DARS only if it is a degree requirement.

It would be progress to have no required grade

Allow #1 in moderation.

Is a certain grade in a course needed for a student to be successful in their career - no
In-major GPA requirement in PTD should be used to monitor students' progress instead
of grades for specified courses

The committee agrees that statements in category #1 should not include specified grades, but instead should include a statement that a course needs to be "passed with the required grade," thus referring to the graduation requirements.