

MEETING 09/23/25

23 SEPTEMBER 2025 / 12:00 PM / Zoom

ATTENDEES

Michel Pleimling, Dan Thorp, Keith Thompson, Keith Goyne, Lauren Thomas, Susan Sumner, Jennifer Pike (meeting notes)

NOTES

Email from Rick Sparks shared during meeting highlights two issues with Policy 6815:

Policy 6815 Undergraduate Graduation, section 2.1.2,

1. **Policy Text: 2.1.2** - *The SENIOR RESIDENCY RULE requires that the senior year, with a minimum of 30 semester hours, must be completed in residence, or 30 semester of the last 45 semester hours must be completed in residence, provided that only approved elective courses taken IN ABSENTIA are transferred to complete requirements.*
2. **Issue:** Banner will record all course credit regardless if it was earned at VT or through transfer credit.
3. **Potential Solution:** Eliminate this section of the policy.

Policy 6815 Undergraduate Graduation, new section

1. **Issue:** Currently a student can earn multiple majors or degrees within the same degree. Banner does not have the ability to support this.
2. **Potential Solution:** Eliminate student's ability to earn multiple majors or degree that are part of the same degree

First Issue

2.1.2 Senior residency rule. Is there a reason to have this rule? It is outdated and there are instances where this requirement is waived. It will not be enforceable in Banner SaaS.

The question was raised whether the University needs parameters regarding transfer hours – ie, a policy that requests a minimum number of credits from VT for a degree.

No more than half of credits required for a degree can come from a 2-year college (see Section 2.1.1), but VT does not have limits of its own regarding transfer credits from four-year institutions.

Section 2.3 *Combination Degrees* also contains a residency rule under point 1: “At least two of the three years of pre-professional work, **including the third year in residence**, must be at this university.” Does this also need to be changed?

We need to remove the senior residency rule, but do we need to add something to clarify the maximum number of credits that can be transferred (or, equivalently, the minimum number of credits earned at VT for a VT degree)?

Second Issue

Earning multiple degrees under one degree program will not be possible with Banner SaaS.

This change can be included in Section 2.2 *Double Majors and Second Degrees*, a new section is presumably not needed.

Should this be extended to no longer allow double majors where both majors are from the same degree program?

One could add to section 2.2 “Once a degree is earned, it cannot be earned again,’ or something similar.

Other parts of the Policy that need to be updated

Section 2.1: Before the meeting the Registrar suggested changing the sentence “The number of credit hours required vary from one major to another” to “The number of credit hours required is typically 120 but can vary from one degree to another.” Some discussion took place whether “typically” is the correct word to use.

Should Section 2.1.3 include a note that students should use their degree audit to check whether or not requirements are fulfilled? There is consensus that this should be added. The same is true regarding a note that students should apply for their degree. Possible rewrite: “Degree candidates should retrieve information from the academic catalog of their year of entry or change of major or obtain it from their assigned academic advisor. The university maintains a degree auditing system that can be used throughout the student’s candidacy for degree.”

Section 2.4.1 Degree Conferring Dates: Currently, graduates are supposed to walk at a Commencement ceremony after they fulfill all graduation requirements. This is not enforced, neither for the University ceremony nor for the College ceremonies, and every student showing up at a Ceremony is allowed to walk. Can the sentence about asking a dean to attend an earlier ceremony be removed as it is not enforced or even checked? It is proposed that the sentence “Participation in Commencement does not equal a conferral of a degree” is added to this section.

3.1 Graduation Requirements: A discussion took place regarding the “file” of all the official degree requirements maintained by the Registrar.

Associate Degrees: A suggestion was made to extend Policy 6815 to also include Associate Degree students as there is currently no policy that covers graduation of these students.

Email exchange with the Registrar after the meeting

1. Email with questions and concerns sent to Rick Sparks, University Registrar, on 9/24/2025

Rick,

APC met yesterday to discuss changes to Policy 6815. During the discussion some questions and concerns came up that we need your feedback on.

1. The Registrar requested removing Section 2.1.2 *Senior Residency Rule* because “Banner will record all course credit regardless if it was earned at VT or through transfer credit.” The Committee noted that Section 2.3 *Combination Degrees* also contains a residency rule under point 1: “At least two of the three years of pre-professional work, **including the third year in residence**, must be at this university.” Doesn’t the issue noted for Section 2.1.2 also apply to Section 2.3? If so, should the passage in bold above be removed?
2. Does a policy exist that sets expectations regarding the number of credits earned at Virginia Tech to receive a Virginia Tech degree? Concerns were voiced that without the Senior Residency Rule students transferring from a four-year institution may transfer so many credits that they only need to pass a few courses at Virginia Tech to receive a VT degree (an example was mentioned in CNRE where at other institutions well established online courses exist that are very close to what is taught at VT so that upper-level courses easily transfer). Should there be a limit on the number of credits that can be transferred from a four-year institution to replace the Senior Residency Rule?
3. The new sentence “Students cannot earn multiple degrees, majors, or major options that are part of the same degree,” proposed in Section 2.2 *Double Majors and Second Degrees*, was found to be not very clear. Is there a better way to formulate this? Something like “Once a degree is earned, it cannot be earned again through a different major or major option”?

4. In Section 2.4.1 *Degree Conferring Dates* the Committee proposes to remove “after completion of degree requirements” in line 5 as this is currently not enforced for University and (most) College ceremonies. Would this be okay? It seems that most Colleges do not have a process to determine if a student can walk in a ceremony (i.e. whoever shows up at the College ceremony is allowed to attend).

5. As there is no graduation policy for associate degree students, could Policy 6815 include both undergraduate and associate graduation? It seems that needed changes would be minor and that the biggest change would be to replace at the beginning “student” with “a student in an associate or undergraduate degree program” or something similar and clarify in a few places that something only applies students in undergraduate programs.

With best regards,

Michel

2. Email response from Rick Sparks, University Registrar, received on 9/24/2025

Michel - replied to each question in bold and underline.

The Registrar requested removing Section 2.1.2 *Senior Residency Rule* because “Banner will record all course credit regardless if it was earned at VT or through transfer credit.” The Committee noted that Section 2.3 *Combination Degrees* also contains a residency rule under point 1: “At least two of the three years of pre-professional work, **including the third year in residence**, must be at this university.” Doesn’t the issue noted for Section 2.1.2 also apply to Section 2.3? If so, should the passage in bold above be removed? **- Yes - good catch! This should also be removed.**

2. Does a policy exist that sets expectations regarding the number of credits earned at Virginia Tech to receive a Virginia Tech degree? Concerns were voiced that without the Senior Residency Rule students transferring from a four-year institution may transfer so many credits that they only need to pass a few courses at Virginia Tech to receive a VT degree (an example

was mentioned in CNRE where at other institutions well established online courses exist that are very close to what is taught at VT so that upper-level courses easily transfer). Should there be a limit on the number of credits that can be transferred from a four-year institution to replace the Senior Residency Rule? - this is a great quest! We do not have a policy that defines the minimum number of credits that need to be earned at VT outside of SACSCOC minimum (25%). We have a limit on community college credit, only allowing up to 50% of the degree's credits to transfer (this has been challenged at times in the past but I feel it makes sense given the difference between lower and upper division courses and that generally a degree would contain roughly 50% of each). So - 50% is clearly too high, so the question is, is 25% too low. I will say that I don't have a strong opinion - on it's surface 25% FEELS a bit low but I don't have a specific suggestion as to a different percentage. you may not have gotten there in your conversation, but does the committee have any opinions?

3. The new sentence "Students cannot earn multiple degrees, majors, or major options that are part of the same degree," proposed in Section 2.2 *Double Majors and Second Degrees*, was found to be not very clear. Is there a better way to formulate this? Something like "Once a degree is earned, it cannot be earned again through a different major or major option"? Yeah - sorry about that. That sentence isn't very good - I was trying to pull in suggestions from areas of the office and did a poor job on this one. At minimum, we need to create language to say that a student cannot earn a dual degree within the same degree program regardless of the number of majors that have been established beneath that degree. Ideally - we wouldn't let students earn even a double major with 2 majors that are beneath the same degree however, I suspect going that far will not be well received. Do you have sense of what the committee would think?

4. In Section 2.4.1 *Degree Conferring Dates* the Committee proposes to remove "after completion of degree requirements" in line 5 as this is currently not enforced for University and (most) College ceremonies. Would this be okay? It seems that most Colleges do not have a process to determine if a student can walk in a ceremony (i.e. whoever shows up at the College ceremony is allowed to attend). Yes - sounds good to me.

5. As there is no graduation policy for associate degree students, could Policy 6815 include both undergraduate and associate graduation? It seems that needed changes would be minor and that the biggest change would be to replace at the beginning “student” with “a student in an associate or undergraduate degree program” or something similar and clarify in a few places that something only applies students in undergraduate programs. **Good thought - let's proceed assuming we're going to expand to include AS students - I'll have our graduation team think this through to ensure I'm not missing anything that would prohibit this.**

NEXT MEETING’S AGENDA

Continue the discussion of the revision of policy 6815.