

CAP has recommended the following modifications to the Change of Major policy:

1. That the Change of Major Request policy and the Change of Major policy be combined.
2. That the language in the major change request policy be replaced with: “All major change requests must be received by Admissions no later than May 15. After that date, a student's major cannot be changed until after a student's first semester has commenced, at which point a student must follow the internal transfer process.”
3. In regards to the internal transfer process, that a designated performance standard in no more than three foundation courses be required for entry into a new major.
4. That in lieu of or in addition to a foundations course, programs may require an audition, portfolio, essay, or interview and that no more than three performance standards be required of any students wishing to change a major (i.e., a course, a portfolio, and an interview). All entrance requirements must be approved by the program’s dean.
5. That all programs be required to publish entrance requirements and evaluation criteria for audition, portfolio, essays, or interviews in the *Undergraduate Bulletin* and departmental websites.
6. That the policy include the following statement: “The College recognizes its responsibility to facilitate the requests of students who wish to change majors. It must be recognized, however, that certain departments have space and enrollment requirements that necessitate more stringent entrance requirements than do others.”
7. That the policy include the following statement: “Students should understand that by commencing a new program after matriculation the student may ultimately complete more than the minimum number of course units required for a degree and may prolong the period of study at The College of New Jersey.”
8. The entire preliminary recommendation can be found below.

CAP's Preliminary Recommendation on Change of Major Policy

Background:

On September 16th, 2015 CAP received a charge from the Steering Committee regarding the change of major policy currently in place at the College. The charge noted that "TCNJ's current policies are vague on the issue of admissions standards and procedures for internal transfers." Steering also noted a significant discrepancy among departments' change of major policies and that while some departments "have no set requirements or procedures for internal transfers" others "require students to pass certain gateway courses and/or meet certain GPA standards." Steering concluded that these discrepancies and the lack of a clear college-wide policy "have led to problems for students."

Testimony:

Steering requested that CAP use the following protocol when addressing this charge. First, produce a revised change of major policy that addresses the issues noted above. Second, solicit testimony from "Department Chairs, Deans, Admissions, Records & Registration, and the Center for Student Success, as well as other stakeholders deemed appropriate by CAP." Third, solicit testimony from the College-community through the Faculty and Staff Senates, Student Government, and open fora.

Preliminary Recommendation:

Introduction

CAP recognizes that the current policy should be updated to address ways in which needs have evolved since the policy was last reviewed and that there is opportunity for a revised policy to be more inclusive of the differing needs of the variety of academic programs on campus while maintaining fairness to students and consistency with the College's mission. It also recognizes that, as practices on campus have come to vary widely and in ways often contradictory to current policy, a revised policy is needed to ensure current and future practices involving change of major remain fair and transparent.

CAP recommends that to fully address Steering's charge to CAP that it "revise the Change of Major policy so that it sets clear standards for how academic departments and programs develop admission standards and procedures for internal transfer students," a total of three policies must be reviewed:

- 1) Change of Major
- 2) Change of Major Requests
- 3) Program Entrance, Retention, and Exit Standards.

Proposed Amendments to Change of Major Policy, for review

1. CAP recommends combining the “Change of Major Requests” policy with the “Change of Major” policy and delineating the scope of each with sections devoted to pre-matriculation and post-matriculation respectively. It also recommends Major Change Requests Policy, Item III, which currently states a change of major after the admissions deadline must occur within a student’s first semester, be amended thus: “All major change requests must be received by Admissions no later than May 15. After that date, a student's major cannot be changed until after a student's first semester has commenced, at which point a student must follow the internal transfer process.”
2. The committee recognizes that, while advising materials such as 4-year plans are useful in discussing a student’s goals and program requirements and shaping expectations, such items should not serve as a determining factor in whether a student is admitted to a program. In the case of 4-year plans for instance, a student should be free to extend their studies to complete requirements for a major rather than be denied acceptance to a program based on the content of their 4-year plan.
3. Committee recommends amending and revising the “Program Entrance, Retention, and Exit Standards” policy referenced in the “Change of Major” policy:
 - a. ~~“All programs have a minimum specific entrance requirement for students seeking to transfer into that major, consisting of a designated performance standard in at least one and no more than three "foundation" courses that are predictive of success in the major. Students who successfully complete the foundation course(s) have fulfilled the entrance requirements for the major.”~~
 - a. When there is capacity in the major, and when there are no department-specific entrance requirements, students in good standing may change majors through the completion of a Change of Major form alone. Departments may set additional requirements, as needed, with the approval of the dean. Additional entrance requirements for students seeking to transfer into a major may consist of one and no more than three of the following (e.g., a course, a portfolio, and an interview; or three courses):
 - 1) a designated performance standard in up to three foundations courses that are predictive of success in the major
 - 2) designated performance standard in an audition or portfolio
 - 3) completion of an essay
 - 4) completion of an interview

Each program’s entrance requirements must be published in the ‘Program Entrance, Retention, Exit Standards’ section of the corresponding department/program listing in the *Undergraduate Bulletin*, and must provide the minimum grade required in any specific foundation courses, as well as the expectations and

evaluation criteria for any auditions, portfolios, essays and interviews that are required. While this information may appear other venues, such as departmental websites, the *Undergraduate Bulletin* shall be recognized as the definitive source.

- b. CAP recommends that a minimum grade standard in select foundation courses remain the most important indicator of whether a student will succeed in a new major, except in programs such as music and art where an audition or portfolio is regarded as the most important indicator.
- c. In cases where foundation courses are not open enrollment, CAP recommends that departments be required to establish a process by which non-majors may be enrolled in foundation courses that is clearly communicated in the course catalog and bulletin.
- d. CAP recommends that departments in consultation with the dean determine capacity for internal transfers using criteria consistent with that used to determine capacity for freshman and external transfers.
- e. Where applicable, programs must inform students that they are applying to a major that is at or near capacity and that admission to the major cannot be guaranteed.
- f. CAP recommends that where the number of qualified applicants (in that they have met baseline standards) exceeds capacity, departments be permitted to consider additional criteria such as GPA, performance in other courses as evidenced on the student's transcript, or essay when determining which applicants to admit to the major. Such additional criteria can be useful in giving faculty a more holistic understanding of a student's goals and ability to succeed in a major. However, the committee recognizes that such criteria should be used with discretion. For instance, GPA may not be a good indication of student's ability to succeed in a new major, as the previous major may not have been a good fit.
- g. With regards to the amount of time a student would need to complete gateway courses and/or other requirements for internal transfers, CAP recommends adding additional language to the "Change of Major" policy to guide students in appropriate expectations, similar to a statement appearing in the section of the policy addressing second or third plans: "Students should understand that by commencing a new program after matriculation the student may ultimately complete more than the minimum number of course units required for a degree and may prolong the period of study at The College of New Jersey."