

CAP's Final Recommendation on Change of Undergraduate Major Policy

TO: Steering Committee

From: Committee on Academic Programs

RE: Final Recommendation on Change of Undergraduate Major

Date: May 16, 2017

Background:

In September 2015 Steering charged CAP with revising the Change of Major policy “so that it sets clear standards for how academic departments and programs develop admissions standards and procedures for internal transfer students”. Furthermore CAP was instructed that “In developing a revised policy, CAP should keep in mind that, in ordinary circumstances, departments should accept academically qualified internal transfer students. Any departments that wish to set standards above the minimum retention standards of the College need to present a clear rationale and have it approved by the appropriate Dean as well as the Provost.” Steering identified the following eight specific issues to address in revising the policy:

1. What should be the baseline standards and procedures for changing a major.
2. Determine whether newly matriculated students (after closure of admissions procedure until GPA is established) should be bound by this policy.
3. What are the justifiable reasons for which a department or program may set higher standards.
4. The appropriateness of entry requirements such as GPA, gateway courses, auditions, portfolios, etc.
5. The amount of time a student would need to complete gateway courses and/or other requirements for internal transfers. Is it appropriate for a department to set standards that would take a student an academic year to meet, with no guarantee of admission to the major?
6. Identify appropriate criteria for limits due to capacity e.g. lab space
7. Transferring into double-major programs (such as English-Elementary Ed). If each department involved has different standards for internal transfers, how is this discrepancy addressed?
8. The process by which the Deans and Provost approve admissions standards

In May 2016, CAP sent a final recommendation to Steering regarding the Change of Major policy and two related policies. Steering felt that while these revisions addressed many of the eight issues in the original charge, the final recommendation did not fully address the concerns raised in the original charge.

In September 2016 CAP received a new charge from the Steering Committee on this issue. CAP was asked to create a new Change of Major policy, rather than revising existing policy.

Testimony:

CAP prepared a preliminary recommendation on the Change of Major Policy. This recommendation was forwarded to Academic Leaders in Fall 2016. In April 2016 an open forum was held to solicit testimony on the recommendation. In addition, testimony was received in the Faculty Senate and Staff Senate meetings on April 19. The preliminary recommendation was emailed to the campus community and student government, and email testimony was received from faculty, staff, and students.

Final Recommendation:

After discussion and revision following testimony received, CAP approves the attached Change of Undergraduate Major Policy.

Final Recommendation on Change of Undergraduate Major Policy

I. INTRODUCTION

The College of New Jersey has an obligation to enable undergraduate students in good academic standing to gain admission into an appropriate major(s). The policy guiding internal transfers or the addition of a second major must be sufficiently flexible to accommodate unforeseen circumstances and recognize that departments may face capacity issues that compel them to be selective when accepting internal transfers. The Change of Major Policy assumes that, in ordinary circumstances, departments should accept academically qualified internal transfers into their major and that, when departments have set standards above or beyond the minimum retention standards of the College, they have done so in accordance with a clear rationale that has been approved by both the appropriate Dean and the Provost.

Students desiring to change their major are expected to take advantage of college resources such as the Career Center, Center for Student Success, etc. in order to gather information while making a decision. It is the responsibility of the student to be informed about requirements for the requested major, and the student is required to meet the application deadline for the Change of Major request.

The following are the college-wide standards for Change of Major.

II. DEFINITIONS

Foundational Course – a course that is a required prerequisite for a student to be admitted into a major. A foundational course may not have a prerequisite that counts towards the degree.

Premajor – An undergraduate student is designated as a premajor during the transitional semester when they are enrolled in a required foundational course. Premajor students are advised by a premajor faculty member.

Undesignated transitional student – a student who has been dismissed from their program.

III. POLICY

This policy aims to balance the need for TCNJ students to easily transfer between majors, while ensuring that they are prepared to succeed in their new major.

The following are the college-wide standards for program entrance.

1. TCNJ students in good academic standing, newly matriculated and first-term students without a GPA are allowed to apply to any academic major by following an application process.
2. If a program has capacity for applicants, applicants must be admitted into the major or pre-major subject to any entrance requirements the program may have as outlined in number 5 below.
3. If an academic program does not have capacity for all applicants, the applications will be

considered competitively.

- a. After the add/drop period each term, the dean will determine capacity in consultation with the department or program.
 - b. A website repository including capacity information, entrance requirements, and application deadline information for each department or program will be maintained by Academic Affairs to ensure a transparent process for students seeking admission.
 - c. Students seeking to transfer into a major will make the request by filling out a form in accordance with the deadline stated on the academic calendar.
 - d. The department will evaluate applications on a competitive basis to fill available spots in the major.
4. Applicants admitted through 2. or 3. who have met the academic program's entrance requirements will be immediately admitted into the major. Applicants admitted under 2. or 3. who have not yet met the academic program's entrance requirements but have fulfilled any prerequisites for foundational courses must be immediately admitted into the pre-major and assigned an academic advisor from the program. The semester following acceptance into the premajor serves as a transitional semester while the student completes the program entrance requirements.
- a. Pre-major status guarantees placement in courses required for entrance into the major.
 - b. If the pre-major successfully completes the program entrance requirements the student will be admitted to the major at the end of the transitional semester.
 - c. Pre-major students who are unable to successfully complete the program entrance requirements by the end of the transitional semester may be dismissed from the pre-major at the discretion of the department. These students will become undesignated transitional students.
5. Academic programs may add entrance requirements for internal transfer students, but such requirements must be recommended through appropriate curricular governance processes within the academic unit. Programs must justify these requirements, explaining why they are necessary for student admission to the major or pre-major. Such recommendations must be approved by the dean and the provost.
- a. Entrance requirements must be able to be met at the time of application or within the following semester (i.e., students need to be able to take any entrance requirement course in the semester immediately following the application). Courses that are not offered every semester cannot be used as entrance requirements.
 - b. There should be at most two such entrance requirements for each program or major. Entrance requirements may include such things as specific gateway courses or evaluations, an essay, a meeting or interview (with specific, published goals), a performance or portfolio evaluation, or a combination of the above.
 - c. Programs that have special requirements (e.g. portfolios or auditions) as part of the regular TCNJ admissions process do not need to seek governance approval

when implementing these entrance requirements for internal transfer students. Such entrance requirements are considered one of the two entrance requirements referred to in 5b.

6. Students seeking dual majors need to meet the requirements of both departments.

IV. RELATED DOCUMENTS

V. HISTORY