

Portland State University Faculty Senate Motion

Revision to BA-BS Requirements – Section B: Reduce Upper Division credits required from 72 to 62

Background, rationale, and preliminary discussions

In response to the report prepared by the Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Summer Research on Academic Program Examination / Reorganization, in October 2020, Faculty Senate charged a joint task force of the Academic Requirements Committee (ARC) and University Curriculum Committee (UCC) with evaluating the BA/BS requirements for curricular inefficiencies and recommend ways to streamline them. The task force submitted its report to Faculty Senate in early February, 2021. Material for this motion is drawn from the results of the task force's inquiries.

The task force recommends the reconsideration of the number of upper division credits that PSU requires for a BA or BS degree.

All of the Oregon Public Universities require 60 upper division credits, except the University of Oregon, which requires 62. PSU also requires more upper division credits than other colleges nationwide that have a minimum requirement; the task force found a range from 36 semester-credits (54 quarter credits) at UC-Berkeley to 45 semester-credits (67.5 quarter credits) at Arizona State and were unable to find any college that requires more upper division credits than we do. The current PSU requirement of 72 upper-division credits is especially harmful to our community college transfer students. PSU allows 124 of 180 Associate Degree credits to transfer. However, transfers can only apply 108 of those credits towards their BA or BS degree. Many transfer students graduate with excess credits. Currently a student with 135 transfer credits only needs to take a senior capstone as part of the UNST requirements. If the student completes a major that requires 60 upper-division credits and a senior capstone (6 credits), they would have to take 6 additional upper-division credits beyond the major credits to reach the current 72 UD credits. Changing our requirement to 62 upper-division credits aligns us better with other universities and is more mathematically possible with a capstone (6 crs) or thesis and a minimum of fourteen 4-credit upper-division courses.

The task force consulted with the co-chairs of the University Budget Committee on the reduction of the upper division credits from 72 to 62. One concern is a possible negative impact on tuition revenue. Calculating the financial impact would require a complex analysis of data on student enrollments (transfer, in-state vs. out-of-state status, etc.) The task force at this point is unable to present an estimate of budgetary impact expected by the proposed upper division credit reduction.

We suggest the following motion related to the BA and BS requirements:

Motion presented by the Academic Requirements Committee

The Faculty Senate will revise the BA and BS degree requirements to reduce the total Upper Division credits required from 72 to 62.