

Procedures for curricular changes and their effect on current students

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As departments and programs are continually evaluating their curricula, we expect incremental changes as a matter of course. Major curricular changes are often necessary, albeit less regularly. In this document, we provide procedures for implementing changes to the curriculum and a framework for solving potential problems.

Curricular changes shall be tied to a specific future class rather than effective on a specific date. The purpose of this regulation is to limit the negative impact of the curricular changes on current students. As students are subject to the rules and regulations in place in the ORC published in the year they matriculate, departments and programs should take care to design curricular transitions with a minimum of disruption.

In general, departments/programs should allow current students to adopt new curricular changes into their course of study so long as the change is a broadening of their choices and opportunities. No student shall be required to conform to new departmental or programmatic changes which are more restrictive than those in place upon their matriculation. For example, suppose a department/program currently requires two electives from a list of several courses as part of the requirements for the major. If they expand the list of courses, a student could choose to use the new list to pick his/her electives. If, on the other hand, the department/program changes the requirement to three courses instead of two, the student would not be required to adhere to the new regulation. Another good example of this is the College wide change concerning distributive and world culture designations. For several years, courses were approved and listed with both sets of distributive and world culture designations as different designations applied to different classes.

This stands in contrast to rules of the College, which take effect on a given date and apply to every student from that date forward. For example, the faculty recently adopted a change in the first date upon which a student may declare a major. Upon its adoption, this rule applied to all existing (and future) students.

In those cases when there are students whose academic program is already in progress when a major curricular change occurs, departments/programs shall adopt the following procedure for minimizing the impact on current students.

- A current student whose course of study is disrupted by the curricular change must initiate the change to the new/hybrid course of study. In conjunction with the department/program, the student will craft an appropriate course of study.
- To facilitate this, the department/program will create and disseminate a correspondence between old and new curriculum which would facilitate current students crafting a new major, minor or course of study.
- Upon the mutual agreement of the student and department/program, the revised major/minor shall be reviewed by the appropriate divisional council according to the same rules that apply to special major/minors. Ideally this correspondence should be submitted to Divisional Council at the same time as the curricular plan or if not, soon thereafter.
- If a student chooses not to initiate a change in his/her curricular plan, the department/program must have a plan in place to allow the student to graduate under the original curriculum.