

CALIFORNIA STATE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY, POMONA

ACADEMIC SENATE

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS COMMITTEE

REPORT TO

THE ACADEMIC SENATE

AP-003-234

Revision of Policy 1419 on Concurrent Enrollment for Graduate Students

Academic Programs Committee

Date: 02/07/2024

Executive Committee
Received and Forwarded

Date: 01/24/2024

Academic Senate

Date: 02/14/2024
First Reading
03/13/2024
Second Reading

BACKGROUND:

Policy 1419 in the Academic Manual currently prohibits students from simultaneously enrolling in a bachelor's and master's program, or in two graduate programs simultaneously. Only one exception is allowed, for students simultaneously pursuing a teaching credential and master's degree. There are two shortcomings in current policy.

First, there is no record of Senate approval, placing this policy outside the sphere of shared governance. Second, in 2019 the Academic Senate approved Policy 1121, allowing "blended" programs that combine a bachelor's and master's degree into a single (typically 5-year) coherent program of study. While no such programs currently exist at Cal Poly Pomona, various departments have expressed interest in creating such programs in the near future, and the conflict between Policies 1121 and 1419 will be a problem for such programs. The Academic Programs Committee was thus asked to consider revisions to the language of Policy 1419, so that we have in place a policy that reflects current needs and shared governance.

RESOURCES CONSULTED:

Associate Deans, all colleges
All Department Chairs
Extended Graduate Council (All Graduate Coordinators)
Salomon Oldak, Faculty Director, Graduate Studies
Keith Forward, Interim Associate Vice President for Academic Programs

DISCUSSION:

The AP Committee examined all aspects of the current policy language, which reads:

A student may not enroll for a bachelor's and a master's degree or for two master's degrees concurrently. This does not apply to enrollment with the goal of obtaining a master's degree and a credential at the same time. Qualified students may request to enroll in a credential program concurrently with a master's degree at this university.

For lack of a record of previous deliberation on this policy, we gave fresh consideration to all aspects of the existing policy, and the underlying rationales. We very quickly reached agreement on two points:

First, the allowance for combined master's/credential students should continue, and remain explicit in the policy.

Second, explicit allowance should be made for blended programs, per Policy 1121 and the stated interest of several departments. However, concurrent enrollment in a bachelor's and master's outside the blended context should not be allowed. There is both an academic issue (studying for a graduate degree is a heavy task that requires focus) and a resource issue (graduate students normally already have a bachelor's degree, and the pursuit of a second bachelor's degree via the CSU system is subject to significant limitations).

We also considered the rationale for disallowing concurrent enrollment in two master's programs. In consultation, most respondents who commented on this issue noted the risks inherent in students taking on two challenging graduate programs simultaneously. On the other hand, a few respondents and committee members noted that there are institutions that offer dual-degree master's programs that combine two master's degrees in complementary disciplines. On this campus there is some interest in developing programs that combine an MBA with a more specialized master's degree in a particular business field.

However, after considerable discussion it was determined that crafting such a policy requires significant further research, and should be pursued by people with knowledge of how such programs would operate. We hence anticipate a subsequent referral on that matter in the next year or so.

However, the committee did decide that with the increasing number of non-degree certificate programs on campus, it would be reasonable to extend the allowance for teaching credentials to include all non-degree certificates. Such programs are less onerous than a master's degree, satisfying the concerns raised by some respondents in consultation. The one stipulation is that a student enrolled in a state-supported master's program should only enroll in state-supported certificate programs, and a student enrolled in a self-supported master's program should only enroll in a self-supported certificate program. Simultaneous enrollment in self-supported and state-supported programs creates considerable challenges for financial aid and other processes.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Academic Programs Committee recommends that Policy 1419 be revised to state the following:

A student may not enroll for a bachelor's and a master's degree or for two master's degrees concurrently, with the following exceptions:

- 1) A student may enroll in an approved Blended Program that combines a bachelor's and master's program into one single path, or an approved program that combines a bachelor's program and teaching credential into one single path.
- 2) A qualified student may concurrently enroll in a master's program and a teaching credential program.
- 3) A student may concurrently enroll in a master's program and a non-degree certificate program, provided that either both programs are state-support or both programs are self-support. Double-counting of courses between the master's program and concurrently enrolled non-degree certificate program shall be allowed. Courses taken while previously enrolled in a different program shall be handled per normal University rules for transfer of credits from one program to another.