

## FEC Amendments in Red

Date: September 4, 2013

To: Eddy Souffrant, Faculty President

From: Brian Cooper, Chair, FAPSC

Re: Motion to revise the Definition of Majors and Minors policy

**Motion.** At our September 20, 2013 meeting, the Faculty Academic Policy and Standards Committee voted unanimously to support a motion to revise the Definition of Majors and Minors policy as described below. Please note that this would also change the name of the policy to "Definition of Majors, Minors, Concentrations, and Certificates."

**Background.** In August 2011, Provost Joan Lorden charged FAPSC to review the existing policy, saying: "[It] is out of date and in need of review. It would be helpful to clarify definitions for majors, minors, tracks, concentrations, certificates, etc., and determine what information should appear on the official transcript for students." The policy was last revised in 1985. Realizing that this task required outside expertise and broader input, FAPSC established a working group to consider it in detail. In May 2012, the working group submitted their recommendation to FAPSC in a detailed report.

FAPSC spent most of the 2012–2013 academic year discussing the recommended new language, accepting some parts but substantially revising others. In May 2013, FAPSC presented a draft of this policy to the Associate Deans Council, soliciting feedback from them and from academic advisors across their respective colleges. No problems were identified during this process, and the draft attached to this motion is virtually identical (but for a single word) to the one distributed in summer 2013.

Besides improving clarity and adding (for the first time) definitions of "concentrations" and "certificates," we tried to avoid making the policy unnecessarily restrictive. We know that it would conflict with many current catalog descriptions—particularly the recommendation that we use only the word "concentration" instead of "track," "option," "focus," etc. Existing descriptions would be grandfathered, but programs should have an incentive to adopt the new language quickly because a "concentration" will appear on the transcript, and a clear transcript best serves our students' future professional development.

We also consulted with the chair of the University Course and Curriculum Committee, who would encourage colleges to schedule groups of requests to change obsolete descriptions to "concentrations," and who sees no reason why such requests could not be processed quickly and smoothly.

**Tracked changes.** Note that only item II is the official policy. The rest is explanatory material maintained by Academic Affairs, for which FAPSC has also recommended changes.

## **UNC Charlotte Academic Policy: Definition of Undergraduate Majors and Minors, Concentrations, and Certificates**

### **I. Introduction**

~~None needed. This policy provides for the establishment of University-wide regulations defining majors and minors to read as follows:~~

### **II. Policy Statement**

- ~~1. A major (or concentration) is defined as the in-depth component of the undergraduate curriculum. It consists of a number of courses in one field or in two or more related fields.~~
- ~~2. The minimum-maximum number of hours required for majors within Bachelor of Arts Degree programs is 25-40 hours; for majors within the Bachelor of Science Degree programs, 30-60 hours; and for majors within professional degree programs, 30-80 hours.~~

**MAJOR.** A major represents a degree-seeking student's primary field of study. A major is a structured plan of study requiring a minimum of 30 semester hours. ~~There is no set maximum, but it~~ must be feasible for students to complete ~~all major requirements and non-overlapping general education degree~~ requirements within 128 semester hours. The major appears on the official transcript.

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- ~~3. A minor is an abbreviated concentration which consists of approximately half as many courses as a major.~~
- ~~4. The range of minimum-maximum hours required for a minor is 15-24 for Bachelor of Arts degree programs, 15-29 for Bachelor of Science degree programs and professional degree programs.~~
- ~~5. A minor may be offered by a department or other appropriate faculty group, and elected on an optional basis by the students.~~

~~A department whose major requirements are outside the range recommended for the degree must justify the content of such levels of concentration.~~

**MINOR.** A minor represents an optional, secondary field of study for a degree-seeking student; no student may declare a major and a minor in the same discipline. A minor is a structured plan of study requiring a minimum of 15 semester hours and no more than 29 semester hours exclusive of student teaching. A minor should require significant additional coursework beyond what is already required for a related major. The minor appears on the official transcript.

**CONCENTRATION.** A concentration is a structured plan of study within a major. The number of semester hours for a concentration varies, but is included within the semester hours for the major. The concentration appears on the official transcript.

**CERTIFICATE.** An undergraduate certificate is a structured set of professionally oriented courses designed to provide recognition that the student has completed coursework in an applied area of focus. For degree-seeking students, a certificate program may either

complement or be concurrent with a traditional program of study. The certificate appears on the official transcript.

**Note on terminology.** The following terms should not be used: "area of concentration" (just use "concentration"), "track," "option," "specialty," "emphasis," or "focus."

**Required coursework.** Requirements may include courses bearing the same code as a major or minor, courses offered by the same department but bearing a different code, or related coursework offered by other departments.

**Administration.** Every major, minor, concentration, or certificate must be assigned to a responsible faculty group, most often a department.

### III. Definitions

- Department – A unit within a college representing a discipline. For example, the Department of English is in the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences.
- Major – A student's primary field of study. The subject or area of study in which a student concentrates.
- Minor – A student's optional secondary field of study. The secondary field of study requiring fewer credits than the major.
- Concentration – A structured plan of study within a major.
- Certificate – A structured set of professionally oriented courses in an applied area of focus.

### IV. Policy Contact(s)

- Authority: Faculty Council [Faculty Academic Policy and Standards Committee]
- Responsible Office: Office of the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
- Additional Contact(s): Office of the Registrar

### V. History

- Revised: Month day, 2013
- Revised: April 4, 1985
- Approved: April 21, 1983

### VI. Related Policies, Procedures, and Resources

- UNC Charlotte Academic Policy: Declaring Undergraduate Majors and Minors  
~~There are no Related Policies, Procedures and Resources for this policy.~~

### VII. Frequently Asked Questions

- Which students are covered under this policy? This policy applies to all undergraduate students at UNC Charlotte.