

STATE BOARD FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES
MAY 18, 2006

TITLE: **PROPOSED REVISION TO SECTION 5 OF THE VCCS POLICY**
MANUAL ON THE DEFINITION OF MAJOR (Academic, Student Affairs,
and Workforce Development Committee, III.A.2.c.)

BACKGROUND:

At the June 2002 ASAC meeting, Dr. Barbara Wyles reported that the State Council of Higher Education's new Program Approval Guidelines (effective May 1, 2002) was forcing the VCCS to re-examine the VCCS curricular structure and program classification system. The 2002 SCHEV guidelines, for the first time, defined a “major” and required that all curricula classified under a given CIP Code must include a common core of courses (e.g. 25% of the total credit hours, excluding general education, in a baccalaureate degree program). The VCCS was given additional time (beyond May 1, 2002) to review its curricular (CIP) structure, define a “major” for associate degree programs, and identify those degree programs that did not share a common core. The VCCS would then have to request new CIP codes for any programs that did not meet the new criteria. ASAC recommended a procedure for conducting the review, but in the absence of consistent staff support from the VCCS little progress was made from Fall 2002- Fall 2005.

In Fall 2005, a subcommittee of the Educational Programs Committee examined the VCCS curricular structure and prepared recommendations for modifications to course titles and CIP code classifications. The subcommittee also drafted policy language to define a “major” and align VCCS policy with SCHEV guidelines.

Proposed policy revisions are included for:

- III.A.2.c.(1) Section 5.6.3 (9/05) Repeating a Course
- III.A.2.c.(2) Section 5.6.0.3.1 (9/05) Cumulative Grade Point Average
- III.A.2.c.(3) Section 5.6.0.3.2 (9/05) Curriculum Grade Point Average

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

That the State Board for Community Colleges approve the proposed policy changes to define a “major” for associate degrees.

PREVIOUSLY REVIEWED BY:

- ✓ VCCS Academic Services and Research staff
- ✓ VCCS Academic and Student Affairs Council (approved March 2006)
- ✓ VCCS Advisory Council of Presidents (approved April 2006)

RATIONALE:

These proposed changes will bring VCCS policy language into alignment with the language in SCHEV's policies for program approvals. They are also consistent with SACS policy that requires a general education core of 25% of the total credits in the degree. Finally, the proposed changes are consistent with current VCCS policy (Note "e" in Table 5.1), which states "AAA/AAS degree students should plan to take at least 30 hours in the major; the remaining hours will be appropriate to the major." A program that contains a 15 hour core and a 15 hour specialization would meet this 30 hour requirement.

RESOURCE PERSONS:

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Recommended Changes to Policies, III.A.2.c.(1).

Current language:

5.1.0.0.0 Degree Program

A degree program is a general discipline structure normally identified by a six-digit CIP code number and used for reporting purposes to external agencies

Proposed language (changes shown):

5.1.0.0.0 Degree Program

*A degree program is a ~~general discipline structure normally~~ **broadly structured curriculum leading to the award of an associate's degree; is identified by a six-digit CIP code number and used for reporting purposes to external agencies; and is listed on the student's diploma.***

Proposed language (changes accepted):

5.1.0.1.0 Degree Program

A degree program is a broadly structured curriculum leading to the award of an associate's degree; is identified by a six-digit CIP code used for reporting purposes to external agencies; and is listed on the student's diploma.

Recommended Changes to Policies, III.A.2.c.(2).

Current language:

5.1.0.1.1 Major

A major is a curriculum composed of 100 and 200 level courses that leads to a degree in a discipline or interdisciplinary specialty and is identified by a VCCS curriculum code

Proposed language (changes shown):

5.1.0.0.1 Major

*A major is a ~~curriculum composed~~ **grouping** of 100 and 200-level courses that leads to a degree in **define** a discipline or interdisciplinary specialty; **listed under a common CIP code**; and is identified by a VCCS curriculum code. **All curricula under a CIP code share a common core of courses, defined as 25% of total credits required for the degree, excluding the general education core.***

Proposed language (changes accepted):

5.1.0.0.2 Major

A major is a grouping of 100 and 200-level courses that define a discipline or interdisciplinary specialty; listed under a common CIP code; and identified by a VCCS curriculum code. All curricula under a CIP code share a common core of courses, defined as 25% of total credits required for the degree, excluding the general education core.

Recommended Changes to Policies, III.A.2.c.(3).

Current language:

5.2.0 Review and Approval Procedures

Procedures for the review and approval of degrees, majors, specializations, diplomas, certificates, career studies certificates, and courses are outlined in Table 5-3. These procedures are to be followed by all colleges in the VCCS and information on their implementation is available from the Academic Services and Research Division, VCCS System Office.

Proposed language (changes shown):

5.3.0 Review and Approval Procedures

A new or modified degree program that includes content in a discipline or field not currently offered by the institution requires approval as a new degree program with a separate CIP code. Curriculum changes that result in a degree program that shares fewer than 25% of its courses (excluding the general education core) with an existing program require approval of a new major. VCCS approval is not required for new or modified specializations.

Procedures for the review and approval of degrees, majors, specializations, diplomas, certificates, career studies certificates, and courses are outlined in Table 5-3. These procedures are to be followed by all colleges in the VCCS and information on their implementation is available from the Academic Services and Research Division, VCCS System Office.

Proposed language (changes accepted):

5.4.0 Review and Approval Procedures

A new or modified degree program that includes content in a discipline or field not currently offered by the institution requires approval as a new degree program with a separate CIP code. Curriculum changes that result in a degree program that shares fewer than 25% of its courses (excluding the general education core) with an existing program require approval of a new major. VCCS approval is not required for new or modified specializations.

Procedures for the review and approval of degrees, majors, specializations, diplomas, certificates, career studies certificates, and courses are outlined in Table 5-3. These procedures are to be followed by all colleges in the VCCS and information on their implementation is available from the Academic Services and Research Division, VCCS System Office.