Elevating Options and Concentrations to Full Degree Major Programs

An implementation proposal is required to elevate a formal option, concentration, or emphasis to a full degree program. Each proposal must include, at minimum:

1. A well-supported rationale for elevating the concentration to a full degree program;
2. Side-by-side comparison of the existing degree major and concentration with the proposed new major, showing the catalog number, title, and number of units; and
3. Evidence of a significantly greater campus commitment to the program than was required to establish it as a specialization area.

The elevation process requires system-level review and approval. To merit approval, the new degree program must not have significant overlap with the requirements of the existing degree program from which it was derived. The existing concentration will need to be discontinued when the degree elevation is approved, as programs should not have significantly overlapping content.


Assigned Degree Program Code

Using a master list of degree programs and reporting codes, campuses report to the Chancellor’s Office data on applications, enrollments, and degrees granted in degree programs. To ensure consistent record keeping, campuses use the same pairings of generic systemwide degree program titles and corresponding reporting codes.

The required curriculum for each CSU degree program title (and level) is roughly comparable across the system and reflects the Classification of Instructional Programs ("CIP") program definition for each CIP code. Campuses are allowed to use a slightly different campus-specific title, as long as it is reasonably similar to the official title. The program codes, however, remain the same across the system. The CSU Degrees Database has fields for the official “generic” CSU title and a campus-specific title.

One Degree Title—One Curriculum—One Code

Campuses are to maintain the degree requirements associated with a degree program approved by the Chancellor’s Office; and substantive curricular changes are to be approved by the campus curriculum-approval process. To ensure the integrity of degree programs, each approved degree title is to be associated with only one set of curricular requirements. Requirements in addition to the core curriculum may be achieved through use of subprogram (an option, concentration, or special emphasis), as noted in Executive Order 1071. The program core shall represent the majority of required units so that the program’s student learning outcomes can be achieved by all enrolled students, regardless of subprogram pursued. For more information on the meaning, quality, and integrity of degrees, please see the Western Association of Schools and Colleges Handbook of Accreditation:


Approved Official Systemwide Degree Titles and Reporting Codes

The official list of approved systemwide degree titles and their assigned CSU and CIP reporting codes may be found at:


For further information, please contact:

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