

UNIVERSITY SENATE
UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Introduced by: UAC

Date: April 8, 2013

**PROPOSAL TO MODIFY SENATE BILL 9293-08, “CRITERIA FOR CAPPING OR
RESTRICTING A MAJOR”**

IT IS HEREBY PROPOSED THAT:

1. Senate Bill 9293-08, “Criteria for Capping or Restricting a Major” (see appendix A) be modified, adding “or Minor” to the title and applying the same criteria to requests to restrict minors that the bill currently applies to majors.
2. Section I.B.5 of the same bill be modified to read: “The Undergraduate Academic Council will review restrictions on majors and minors periodically, according to the criteria outlined in this bill, when programs undergo broader review as part of the university’s assessment process (every seven years), or review by external accreditation agencies. As part of this broader review process, programs will include rationales for either maintaining or ending restrictions to their majors or minors and communicate these to UAC.”
3. The restriction justifications apply to minors as well as majors, and this schedule for review apply to all programs with restricted majors or minors beginning in Fall 2013 and continuing thereafter.
4. This bill be forwarded to the President for approval.

RATIONALE

The 1993 legislation establishing criteria for evaluating program (department, school, or college) requests to restrict enrollments in majors makes no mention of minors. However, the university currently offers three restricted minors (Broadcast Meteorology, Education, and Financial Market Regulation), so it is important to establish formally both how governance bodies will evaluate future requests for restrictions and what criteria governance bodies will apply when undertaking periodic reviews of restricted minors (see below).

The original legislation mandates a review by the Undergraduate Academic Council (UAC) of restricted majors—“majors...are restricted in the sense that students must be granted formal departmental or school approval or satisfy stated admissions criteria before being officially classified as that major” (from the Undergraduate Bulletin)—“at least once every five years” (9293-08, I.B.5). This cycle of review has proved to be administratively cumbersome, both for UAC and for the departments and schools in question. These bodies can undertake a far more efficient and useful review process if made a part of the periodic program review process that is part of the assessment regime at the university or, in some cases, of reviews conducted by external agencies for the purposes of accreditation.

Programs reviewed every seven years according to the university’s assessment schedule will at that time undertake a review of the rationale for maintaining their restricted majors and/or minors, gathering data and presenting their findings to UAC. UAC may then undertake a consideration of the case made either to maintain or to remove restrictions on majors or minors. Programs that undergo review as part of an external accreditation will follow the same procedure, but according to their accreditation schedule. This would be the case, for instance, for majors restricted in the School of Business, which undergoes external review for accreditation every five years.

This approach will not only better inform governance bodies such as UAC about how to assess new and continuing requests to restrict majors or minors, but will also provide programs with an opportunity to think systematically about how best to administer their undergraduate curricula to meet the needs of students, faculty, and the university as a whole.

Below is the text of the proposal, which consists of the original bill amended in the way described above.

UNIVERSITY SENATE

UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Introduced by: UAC

Date: April 19, 2013

CRITERIA FOR CAPPING OR RESTRICTING A MAJOR OR MINOR

IT IS HEREBY PROPOSED THAT THE FOLLOWING BE ADOPTED:

- I. The following criteria will be used by the Undergraduate Academic Council (UAC) and other governance bodies to evaluate a department's request to cap or restrict a major or minor in any way:
 - A. The Department must first consult with the Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Studies and the Director of Institutional Research in preparing a written report on a) the impact of the proposed restriction on the University and the department, including enrollment, access to the major or minor, diversity and multiculturalism, and b) possible alternative strategies (e.g., redeployment of the faculty across the departmental curriculum).
 - B. The Department must make its case to UAC based on one or more of the following rationales:
 1. Program Quality-- quality threatened due to instructional resource limitations, e.g.,
 - a) student/faculty ratio
 - b) need for faculty strength in such areas as Gen Ed, non-major/non-minor courses, or graduate program
 2. Prerequisites
 - a) essential incoming competence or preparation
 3. Quantitative Considerations
 - a) inability of students to finish in four years

- b) finite number of student spaces in the program, e.g., field placements
- 4. It is understood that the final decision will be made, on a case-by-case basis, by the Provost in consultation with the University Senate.
- 5. The Undergraduate Academic Council will review restrictions on majors and minors periodically, according to the criteria outlined in this bill, when programs undergo broader review as part of the university's assessment process (every seven years), or review by external accreditation agencies. As part of this broader review process, programs will include rationales for either maintaining or ending restrictions to their majors or minors and communicate these to UAC.
- 6. Notification and Appellate process for applicants to the major or minor.

Any proposal for capping or restricting a major or minor must include details on the notification of students as early in their undergraduate career as possible if they are unlikely to be accepted into the major or minor. The proposal must also include details on the appellate process, which must be made known to applicants to the major or minor. Appeals will be handled within the academic unit; they will be considered by the Committee on Admissions and Academic Standing of the Undergraduate Academic Council only if the issue cannot be resolved at the college or school level.

- II. That this Bill be forwarded to the President for approval and implementation.

RATIONALE

This bill outlines criteria for academic departments or schools seeking to cap the number of majors or minors or to restrict admission to the major or minor through competence or preparation standards.

This policy is designed, first of all, to ensure that the full range of potential impacts on the institution and, especially, on students is established through an administrative review. In addition, the policy identifies, for the first time, the criteria that may be employed to cap or restrict a major or minor. Finally, it identifies an appellate process for students denied admission to the major or minor.

The intention of this policy is to ensure that only those majors or minors meeting clear institutional criteria may implement a cap or restriction in order that students continue to have access to the widest array of majors and minors possible. The periodic review further ensures that any cap or restriction will be tested at a regular interval against changes in disciplines, in the institution, or in other areas such as student demand.

Appendix A: Senate Bill 9293-08, with Proposed Changes Tracked

Senate Bill No. 9293-08

UNIVERSITY SENATE UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Introduced by: Council on Educational Policy

Date: April 19, 1993

Criteria for Capping or Restricting a Major

IT IS HEREBY PROPOSED THAT THE FOLLOWING BE ADOPTED:

1. That the Criteria for Capping or Restricting a Major be approved by the University Senate;
2. That the bill become effective upon the approval of the President; and
3. That the Bill be referred to the President for approval.

UNIVERSITY SENATE

UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Introduced by: Educational Policy Council

Date: April 19, 1993

CRITERIA FOR CAPPING OR RESTRICTING A MAJOR OR MINOR

IT IS HEREBY PROPOSED THAT THE FOLLOWING BE ADOPTED:

- III. The following criteria will be used by the Undergraduate Academic Council (UAC) and other governance bodies to evaluate a department's request to cap or restrict a major or minor in any way:
- A. The Department must first consult with the Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Studies and the Director of Institutional Research in preparing a written report on a) the impact of the proposed restriction on the University and the department, including enrollment, access to the major or minor, diversity and multiculturalism, and b) possible alternative strategies (e.g., redeployment of the faculty across the departmental curriculum).
- B. The Department must make its case to UAC based on one or more of the following rationales:
1. Program Quality-- quality threatened due to instructional resource limitations, e.g.,
 - a) student/faculty ratio
 - b) need for faculty strength in such areas as Gen Ed, non-major/non-minor courses, or graduate program
 2. Prerequisites
 - a) essential incoming competence or preparation
 3. Quantitative Considerations
 - a) inability of students to finish in four years

- b) finite number of student spaces in the program, e.g., field placements
4. It is understood that the final decision will be made, on a case-by-case basis, by the Vice President for Academic AffairsProvost in consultation with the University Senate.
 5. The Undergraduate Academic Council will review restrictions on majors and minors periodically, according to the criteria outlined in this bill, when programs undergo broader review as part of the university's assessment process (every seven years), or review by external accreditation agencies. As part of this broader review process, programs will include rationales for either maintaining or ending restrictions to their majors or minors and communicate these to UAC. All restrictions, existing and new, will be reviewed at least once every five years. These reviews insofar as possible will be clustered by cognate disciplines, following the process outlined in these guidelines.
 6. Notification and Appellate process for applicants to the major or minor.

Any proposal for capping or restricting a major or minor must include details on the notification of students as early in their undergraduate career as possible if they are unlikely to be accepted into the major or minor. The proposal must also include details on the appellate process, which must be made known to applicants to the major or minor. Appeals will be handled within the academic unit; they will be considered by the Committee on Admissions and Academic Standing of the Undergraduate Academic Council only if the issue cannot be resolved at the college or school level.

IV. That this Bill be forwarded to the President for approval and implementation.

RATIONALE

~~In response to a request from the Undergraduate Academic Council, the Educational Policy Council's Long-Range Planning Committee undertook a year-long review to~~This bill develop outlines criteria for academic departments or schools seeking to cap the number of majors or minors or to restrict admission to the major or minor through competence or preparation standards.

This policy is designed, first of all, to ensure that the full range of potential impacts on the institution and, especially, on students is established through an administrative review. In addition, the policy identifies, for the first time, the criteria that may be employed to cap or restrict a major or minor. Finally, it identifies an appellate process for students denied admission to the major or minor.

The intention of this policy is to ensure that only those majors or minors meeting clear institutional criteria may implement a cap or restriction in order that students continue to have access to the widest array of majors and minors possible. The periodic review further ensures that any cap or restriction will be tested at a regular interval against changes in disciplines, in the institution, or in other areas such as student demand.

APPENDIX B: List of Majors and Minors Currently Restricted

Majors:

- Accounting
- Business Administration
- Criminal Justice
- Economics
- Mathematics
- Nanoscale Science
- Nanoscale Engineering
- Psychology
- Rhetoric and Communication
- Social Welfare
- Sociology
- Faculty-initiated interdisciplinary majors in:
 - Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
 - Financial Market Regulation
 - Public Health
 - Special departmental program majors in Art and Art History and Music

Minors:

- Broadcast Meteorology—for ATM majors only
- Education
- Financial Market Regulation