

**UNIVERSITY SENATE**  
**UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY**  
**STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK**

Introduced by: Graduate Academic Council  
Undergraduate Academic Council

Date: March 4, 2009

**PROPOSAL TO AMEND UNIVERSITY POLICY PERTAINING TO  
COMBINED BACCALAUREATE-MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAMS**

IT IS HEREBY PROPOSED THAT THE FOLLOWING BE ADOPTED:

1. That the University Senate approves the attached policy amendment as approved by the Graduate and Undergraduate Academic Councils.
2. That this proposal be forwarded to the President for approval.

## Proposed Revision to Billing Policy of Bachelor's Master's Students

[http://www.albany.edu/graduatebulletin/requirements\\_combined\\_baccalaureate\\_masters.htm](http://www.albany.edu/graduatebulletin/requirements_combined_baccalaureate_masters.htm)

[http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate\\_bulletin/joint\\_degree.html](http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/joint_degree.html)

### Current version of bachelor's-master's policy:

#### Admissions and Administrative Procedures

2. Although admitted to an integrated degree program, students will be considered as undergraduate students for the purposes of tuition, financial aid, and headcount identification until completion of 120 credits of satisfactory work. Upon meeting that requirement, students will be considered graduate students for purposes of tuition, headcount identification, and eligibility for graduate assistantships, fellowships, and loans. A graduate transcript will be initiated for the students at the 120 credit-hour threshold

### Proposed Revision to bachelor's-master's policy

#### Admissions and Administrative Procedures

2. Although admitted to an integrated degree program, students will be considered as undergraduate students for the purposes of tuition, financial aid, and headcount identification until completion of 12 credits of graduate course work or qualified to receive the bachelor's degree. In the semester in which a student enrolls in the 13<sup>th</sup> credit of graduate coursework, he or she will be considered a graduate student for purposes of tuition, headcount identification, and eligibility for graduate assistantships, fellowships, and loans whether or not the student has completed the bachelor's degree.

Students' progress through the combined program will be reviewed in the Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education to ensure timely completion of the undergraduate degree. Academic advisors of bachelor's-master's programs and students themselves should also attend to course enrollment choices that lead to timely completion of undergraduate requirements.

### Rationale for revision

The University is interested in recruiting students into bachelor's-master's programs. At the same time, it must ensure that there is a clear enforceable policy in place to prevent a student from taking the entire master's degree while paying undergraduate tuition. The current approach has been to use accumulated undergraduate credits of bachelor's-master's students to establish the student's status. However, this method has several problems:

- 1) It reflects a somewhat outdated perspective on undergraduate students' college career. It does not match the increasingly broad set of circumstances through which students acquire more credits than they need to complete a degree (e.g., non-applicable credits through change of major; college credit earned in high school including AP credit; transfer coursework, double major, study abroad, etc.);
- 2) There has been no effort to bring academic advisors into the conversation with students BEFORE the higher charges begin to appear on bills, creating confusion and ill will for students; and
- 3) Only students in these combined degree programs are subject to such charges for taking more than 120 undergraduate credits while other students can accumulate an unlimited number of undergraduate credits.

The proposed approach, modeled after others in the SUNY system, focuses on the graduate credits accumulated. Because 12 credits of coursework can be applied to both the undergraduate degree and graduate degrees, the 13<sup>th</sup> graduate credit is a logical point at which to begin charging graduate tuition. (SUNY Policy prevents the University from "splitting" charges between the graduate and undergraduate rates, and financial aid may only be applied in a given semester at the undergraduate or graduate rates.)