

The Matriculated Student: An Academic Statement

by Bob Silverman

One of the major concerns of the Academic Senate has been Academic Accountability. Many of our resolutions passed at previous conferences have been intended to increase accountability by recommending advisement and assessment, evidence of academic progress, and maintenance of satisfactory academic status for community college students. These along with some other concepts could be used to distinguish the “serious” student from the “avocational” student.

At this time, several State agencies (California Postsecondary Education Commission, the Legislature, the Board of Governors, and the Chancellor’s staff) are attempting to classify students according to their motive for attending a Community College. The question in the future will be “Which students, identified by certain characteristics, will be eligible for continued state support and which students will be required to increase the level of self support?” The ACR-81 report delivered to the Legislature last spring stated as an option for establishment of student fee levels the following:

Option 3: Charge all or some students differential fees based on whether or not they are matriculated. Matriculation would involve the submission of high school and college transcripts, demonstration of the capacity to do college-level work, or both. This would provide the largest State subsidy and assure low fees for those students who choose an educational program whether full or part time rather than those who enroll for individual courses. Students who matriculate and who are apparently deficient in basic skills would take placement tests and those whose performance indicates low probability of success without remediation would be counseled into appropriate skill-building courses and programs. Applicants not wanting to matriculate could enroll in individual courses.

The requirements for obtaining and maintaining the matriculated status are very important in this time of changing attitudes. A possible way to further our academic accountability concerns and protect the serious student from high fees is to define the matriculated status. The following are suggestions which could be included in a policy statement.

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To obtain matriculated status, a student must:

1. Submit a completed application with a complete (high school and all previous college) set of transcripts. An appeal process should be developed to settle disputes which may arise.
2. Meet with a credentialed counselor for career and academic advisement.
3. Declare one of the following goals:
 - a. Transfer (liberal arts)
 - b. Associate degree
 - c. Vocational certificate
4. Be assessed by tests in English and mathematics competency.

To maintain matriculated status, a student must:

1. Show progress towards the stated goal by meeting at least one of the following:
 - a. Satisfactory completion of at least one course applying to the declared major each academic term.

OR

 - b. Satisfactory completion of at least one general education course each academic term.

OR

 - c. Satisfactory completion of at least one prescribed compensatory course each academic year to overcome diagnosed academic deficiencies.
2. Maintain satisfactory academic status as delineated in the minimum standards for grading policy and the student progress policy adopted by the Board of Governors.
3. Maintain continuous enrollment with not more than two lapses of one semester in enrollment (not including summers).

Some questions to consider:

1. Should matriculated status be linked to the total number of units taken at a California state institution? On one hand, a limit such as 75 units could indicate academic progress; however, it may minimize retraining possibilities. (i.e., should a student with more than 75 units (?) be ineligible for matriculated status?)
2. Should the application process include a fee which could offset the cost of the application and testing process? A fee may offset some of the administrative concerns of the cost.
3. Florida has a very similar type of matriculated student definition. The major difference is that they allow a student to take four courses before requiring matriculation. If a student does not matriculate after the fourth course, the student must leave or pay a higher tuition.
4. Should a student be required to establish a “program” at the time of advisement and declaration of goal? This program could help focus a student’s course of study and be used to measure progress towards the goal.

There will be a full discussion of this issue at the Fall Conference. Please send your concerns to me or bring them to the conference.