

29 September 1998

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members University Senate

FROM: University Senate Council

RE: AGENDA ITEM: University Senate Meeting, Monday, October 12, 1998. Proposal to require undergraduates to declare a major within the first 60 hours of matriculation at the University of Kentucky.

Proposal

Proposal to require undergraduates to declare a major within the first 60 hours of matriculation at the University of Kentucky.

Background:

The attached proposal was developed by the Undergraduate Council after having been discussed with the Lexington Campus Chancellor, the University Registrar, Academic Deans, the Director of Admissions, some members of the Advising Network and the Academic Affairs co-chairs of Student Government. It was endorsed of the University Studies Committee.

Rationale:

The proposal is designed to help students make a decision about their career and their major within a reasonable period of time. It is designed neither to discourage experimentation by students nor prevent them from attempting more than one career path.

Students are free to change their major at any time.

Adequate provision is made for students in special circumstances (e.g. transfers, students returning from suspension, etc.)

Individual colleges are free to make exceptions to the policy and allow students to go beyond the 60 hours as long as they are willing to admit the students who fulfill the colleges' stipulations

Implementation: The policy will not affect current students but will apply to undergraduates entering the University in the fall of 1999.

The proposal has the support of the Lexington Community College faculty and is recommended by the University Senate Council.

**Note: If approved the proposal will be forwarded to the Rules Committee for codification**

## **University of Kentucky**

### **Declaring a Major: a Proposal**

There is ample evidence that many undergraduates at the University of Kentucky graduate with considerably more than 120 hours of academic credit. Frequently, students accumulate a large number of credit hours while seeking entrance to a particular college or major program without ever achieving their aim or making significant progress toward a degree. Currently there are approximately 500 seniors or juniors without a major and without the prospect of graduating in the near future.

It appears that a large part of the problem is the current policy of allowing undergraduates to continue indefinitely to enroll in classes at the University without declaring a major or being admitted to a particular program. This arrangement leads to two understandable results: excessive accumulation of credits prior to graduation and serious difficulty in providing students with timely and helpful advising.

In order to serve students better and assist them in seeking a degree, the Undergraduate Council proposes a change in policy whereby undergraduates must declare a major by the time they have accumulated 60 earned hours of undergraduate credit. By stipulating the time (i.e. the credit hours) within which students must be admitted to a major program, the University can accomplish several desired ends: a) students will tend to focus their attention on a major or career goal earlier in their academic life than has been the case heretofore; b) students who have little or no prospect of gaining entrance to a desired program will make plans for an alternate major and career; c) students will save time, money, and aggravation by graduating in a more timely manner; d) students currently unable to enroll in classes in their major because desired places are taken by individuals who will never gain admission to that college or program, will be better able to get the courses they need.

For these reasons we propose the following academic policy for undergraduates at the University of Kentucky.

1. In the semester in which the 45th hour is earned, students at the University of Kentucky who have not chosen a major or been admitted to a selective admissions college shall meet regularly with an advisor in order to determine their major within the ensuing semester.

2. In the semester in which the 60th hour is earned, students who have not chosen a major or been admitted to a selective admissions college shall have a registration stop placed on their record until such time as they have chosen a major.

3. The Central Advising and Transfer Center, as well as Colleges with undeclared majors, will inform students of their academic status at appropriate stages in order to assist them in gaining entrance to a major program.

4. Students who have earned 60 hours and are lacking specific courses to gain admission to a college or to declare a particular major will be granted an extra fifteen earned credits before a stop is placed on their record *if they have a written commitment from the college of their choice to accept them upon successful completion of specified courses.*

5. Students may change their major at any time during the approved periods.

6. Students with 60 or more hours 1) who have been dropped from a college for academic reasons, or 2) who have been readmitted to the University of Kentucky with 60 or more hours, or 3) who are transfer students will be allowed an additional 15 earned credit hours before they must declare a major.

7. The deans of the individual colleges will handle appeals from students wishing to enroll in specific academic programs.

Although this policy will not ensure that all students share the benefits outlined above, it will work toward that end and in doing so will enable the University of Kentucky to provide better service to all its undergraduates.