

Efficient Progress toward Degree Credits Not Required for Graduation by Major

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Institutional Research & Assessment
April 2, 2012

Introduction

Each semester, students in degree programs register for courses, most of which will apply toward their degree requirements, thus allowing them to make progress toward graduation. Nevertheless, some course will not apply toward their degree.

What Is a Moot Course and a Moot Credit?

A moot course is a course that does not apply toward any degree requirement in the student's curriculum. A moot credit is a credit in such a course.

Why do Students Register for Moot Courses?

Students may, of course, take some courses that do not apply toward their degree to expand their horizons, examine future educational channels, or to improve their professional skills. Some students may register for second-year level courses simply to transfer these less expensive credits to a senior college. Finally, some students may register for moot credits to meet visa, financial aid or other eligibility requirements.

At the same time, moot credits may result from a lack of understanding or awareness of degree requirements and incorrect advisement. Also, students may have misperceptions regarding exemptions, waivers and permits or program requirements that were changed but not officially updated.

Moot Courses and Credits in Progress in Spring 2012 (Process and Current Status)

Using the students' degree audit system (DegreeWorks), I evaluated all current credit-bearing registrations against each student's degree requirements. DegreeWorks allows the classification of each course into a degree requirement, taking into account the student's major, option and catalog year.

As of the March 26, 2012 census date, students' registration to courses in session I and session II indicates:

- (a) 3,170 students were registered for classes that do not apply toward their degree. This is 20% of the 15,721 students who registered for classes in degree programs. (Students in non-degree programs and high-school students were excluded.)
- (b) 5,017 course registrations will not apply toward students' degrees. This is 10% out of the total of 48,583 credit-barring registrations.
- (c) 13,435 credits were being taken that do not apply toward students' degrees. This is 9% of the total 150,532 credits in progress.

Applications to Students' Progress

Some of the students taking moot credits may be unaware of their departure until they apply for graduation. Some of these students may be using limited financial aid resources for courses that do not apply towards their degree. In addition, a review of the moot courses registration list suggests that some students are using seats in courses that carry both high-demand and limited supply of special rooms and laboratories, (e.g., SCB 203, Anatomy and Physiology). Such cases may affect not only the registered students, but also other students who face limited access to classes required toward their degree program.

Alternative explanations and caveats

(a) Exemptions, Waivers and Substitutions

Some of the moot course registrations may be, in fact, a result of a waiver or a substitution. Some of these changes do not appear to have yet been posted to students' records and will be applied only when an applicant is reviewed for graduation. I estimate that approximately 100 students may be affected by actions that have not been posted (about 3% of the students with moot records).

(b) Changes to a Degree Requirement

The recognition of moot credit depends on the validity of the information included in the degree audit course requirements. When majors or options are updated or changed, some courses may not be classified correctly during the transition period. Even minor changes may affect the status of the credit block, if the system does not recognize the applicability of a credit towards a degree.

Results

The table below shows the proportion of students in each major who have signed up this spring for courses that do not count toward their degree requirements. All developmental courses were counted as "in major" regardless of testing status.

Major	Students in Spring 2012	Students with Moot Credits in Spring 2012 Registrations	% w/Moot Credits in Spring 2012 Registrations	Total moot seats	Total moot credits
Accounting	811	231	28%	319	1,072
Administrative Assistant	9	2	22%	2	18
Biology	120	29	24%	46	126
Business Administration	1,337	128	10%	209	456
Business Management	534	56	10%	88	215
Civil Engineering Science	236	128	54%	189	466
Commercial Photography	222	59	27%	97	298
Communications	148	31	21%	48	144
Computer Operations	176	33	19%	49	143
Computer Science	218	99	45%	151	378
Computer Technology	201	44	22%	72	141
Criminal Justice	997	89	9%	138	288
Dietetic Technician	131	36	27%	48	205
Digital Media Arts	22	11	50%	23	47
Education Associate-The Bilingual Child	78	20	26%	26	121
Electrical Engineering Science	174	100	57%	130	416
EMT/Paramedic	216	33	15%	67	165
Environmental Science	21	5	24%	7	21
Fine Arts	352	67	19%	118	291
Food Service Management	45	11	24%	17	59
Human Services: Child Development	3	2	67%	3	28
Human Services: Gerontology	67	16	24%	21	57
Human Services: Mental Health	349	99	28%	146	441
Industrial Design Technology	12	3	25%	4	8
Liberal Arts (Childhood Education)	486	116	24%	161	540
Liberal Arts (Ed Pgm w Sociology-Queens)	214	76	36%	135	378
Liberal Arts: Mathematics & Science	1,003	218	22%	327	799
Liberal Arts: Social Sciences & Humanities	2,958	358	12%	618	1,513
Mechanical Engineering	144	78	54%	116	300
Microcomputer Systems & Applications	1	0	0%	0	0
Mortuary Science (with AA McAllister)	1	0	0%	0	0
Music Recording Technology	213	62	29%	100	167
New Media Technology	154	24	16%	44	121
Nursing	488	106	22%	189	516
Occupational Therapy Assistant	343	54	16%	86	220
Paralegal Studies	219	34	16%	48	126
Philosophy	36	12	33%	19	50
Physical Therapist Assistant	478	110	23%	171	462
Practical Nursing	478	152	32%	281	881
Programming and Systems	105	22	21%	38	92
Radiologic Technology	234	45	19%	85	326
School Food Service Management	26	16	62%	18	44
Spanish Translation	12	2	17%	2	41
Theatre	24	8	33%	13	29
Travel, Tourism, and Hospitality Management	256	26	10%	41	166
Undeclared Health Major-Nursing	870	197	23%	302	544
Veterinary Technology	411	96	23%	161	376
Writing and Literature	88	26	30%	44	140
All Degree Programs	15,721	3,170	20%	5,017	13,435