



The State University  
of New York

Office of the Chancellor

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[www.suny.edu](http://www.suny.edu)

**REVISED**

**MEMORANDUM**

**December 17, 2012**

**TO: Members of the Board of Trustees**

**FROM: Nancy L. Zimpher, Chancellor**

**SUBJECT: Seamless Transfer Requirements**

**Action Requested**

The proposed resolution approves principles to guide undergraduate curricula to assure seamless transfer within the State University.

**Resolution**

I recommend that the Board of Trustees adopt the following resolution:

Whereas successful student transfer within the State University has been a central theme in the policies and strategic and master plans of the SUNY Board of Trustees since 1972, including Board Resolution 2009-138 on Student Mobility, adopted on November 17, 2009; and

Whereas virtually all State University campuses with undergraduate programs serve as both sending and receiving institutions for transfer students; and

Whereas seamless transfer, which permits students to complete a degree without duplicative effort or unnecessary costs, has become increasingly important for student completion and success; and

Whereas seamless transfer depends, in large part, on common standards in two key components of undergraduate curricula: general education and the major; and

Whereas by Resolution 2009-138 on Student Mobility, adopted November 17, 2009, the Board established guaranteed transfer of SUNY students completing an A.A. or A.S. degree to a SUNY four-year campus; and

Whereas by Resolution 98-241, adopted on December 15, 1998, the Board established a 30-credit SUNY General Education Requirement with ten required academic areas and two required competency areas that provides an intellectual foundation, ensures curricular depth, and encourages academic exploration across disciplines; and

Whereas by Resolution 2010-006, adopted on January 19, 2010, the Board enhanced flexibility in the SUNY General Education Requirement by reducing the number of required academic areas from ten to seven, including mathematics and basic communication, as well as at least five of the other eight academic areas: natural science, social science, American history, Western Civilization, Other World Civilizations, humanities, the arts and foreign languages; and

Whereas the flexibility in Resolution 2010-006 enables campuses to permit students to take SUNY General Education Requirement courses in areas aligned with students' educational plans; and

Whereas to support seamless transfer, faculty identified common student learning outcomes for each SUNY General Education Requirement academic and competency area that guide the development of all SUNY General Education Requirement courses; and

Whereas associate and baccalaureate faculty developed and agreed on transfer paths consisting of commonly defined, foundational courses in the major and associated cognates for several dozen undergraduate majors that account for nearly 95 percent of all transfers within the State University; and

Whereas the State University's transfer paths are designed to enhance seamless transfer within the State University because their courses in the major and associated cognates closely resemble lower-division courses required at other colleges and universities, both public and private; and

Whereas typically several lower-division foundational major courses in a transfer path are completed during the first two years of full-time study of a baccalaureate program; and

Whereas the current SUNY General Education Requirement and transfer paths make it possible for students to complete their SUNY General Education Requirement and sufficient foundational courses in a discipline, as well as associated cognate courses, during the first two years of full-time study of their program; and for a baccalaureate degree to be completed in two additional years of full-time study; and

Whereas the next step to promoting seamless transfer within the State University is to ensure that, within the first two years of full-time study of their programs, students in bachelor's degree programs, Associate of Arts (A.A.), and Associate of Science (A.S.) can complete the SUNY General Education Requirement and a sufficient number of courses in the major, as well as associated cognate courses, to have true junior status; and

Whereas New York State regulations [8 NYCRR sections 52.2(c)(7) and 52.2(c)(8)] require associate degree programs to be normally capable of completion within two years of full-time study or the equivalent, with a minimum of two years of full-time study, and bachelor's degree programs to be normally capable of completion within four years of full-time study or the equivalent, with a minimum of 120 credits; now, therefore, be it

Resolved that the following principles will guide undergraduate curricula within the State University to ensure seamless transfer:

1. Each curriculum leading to an A.A., A.S., and bachelor's degree shall enable students to complete seven of ten SUNY General Education Requirement academic areas (including mathematics and basic communication), two competency areas, and 30 credits of SUNY General Education courses within the first two years of full-time study of the program (or 60 credits, whichever is greater), unless a program-level waiver applies.

2. When a campus or curriculum has lower-division, locally defined general education requirements that exceed the SUNY General Education Requirement, it shall ensure that those local requirements do not prevent a student from completing an undergraduate degree within the program's usual credit requirement.
3. Consistent with prior policy, each incoming transfer student shall have fulfilled a SUNY General Education area, as distinguished from the particular course, if the original SUNY campus deemed it fulfilled.
4. The student shall receive credit for a SUNY General Education Requirement course that applies to the major if successfully completed with a grade of C or above.
5. Consistent with prior policy, each curriculum with a transfer path shall guarantee credit to incoming transfer students for successfully completed transfer path courses in the academic discipline, as well as associated cognate courses, where successfully completed is defined as a minimum grade of C, or higher if the campus has a higher standard for its students who start as freshmen. This provision does not preclude a campus from accepting a lower grade if it so chooses.
6. Each undergraduate curriculum with a transfer path shall require students to complete the number of major courses in the path that will achieve true junior status, as well as associated cognate courses, within the first two years of full-time study in the program. If a transfer path has not yet been established, A.A., A.S., and bachelor's degree programs should ensure that students will have completed sufficient foundational courses to be true juniors after two years of full-time study and, wherever appropriate, a transfer path should be developed.
7. Associate degree programs shall generally require no more than 64 credits that can normally be completed within two years of full-time study or the equivalent, and bachelor's degree programs shall require no more than 126 credits that can normally be completed within four years of full-time study or the equivalent, unless there is a compelling justification.

8. In accordance with SUNY Transfer Guarantee policy, students with an A.A. or A.S. degree having successfully completed the SUNY General Education requirements and the transfer path courses specified for a bachelor's degree shall be guaranteed admission to a four-year campus offering that program, under the same conditions as students who enrolled at the campus as freshmen, consistent with Strategic Enrollment Planning goals, for needs and capacity in each discipline.
9. The State University Provost shall develop methods to provide students at campuses that do not offer all transfer path courses access to those courses at other SUNY campuses so that the students can complete lower-division requirements for seamless transfer.
10. Campuses shall clearly identify and publish program-specific admissions requirements, degree requirements, transfer policies, and transfer appeal mechanisms for their students, faculty and staff. System administration will maintain policies, appeal information and campus contact information on its website.

### **Background**

In support of the State University's continuing commitment to high academic standards, timely degree completion and seamless transfer, this resolution builds on past resolutions related to general education and transfer, and on common student learning outcomes in SUNY General Education courses identified by faculty, as well as transfer paths for several dozen undergraduate majors created by faculty. It clarifies expectations, as follows:

- The first two years of full-time study of an undergraduate program leading to an A.A., A.S., or bachelor's degree will be designed to include: (1) the SUNY General Education Requirement, with seven of ten areas and, 30 credits; and (2) a sufficient number of foundational major courses, as well as associated cognate courses for a bachelor's degree to be completed in two additional years of full-time study. Waivers will be approved for programs with exceptional requirements.
- Each SUNY campus will grant credit to transfer students for successfully completing, as defined, at any SUNY campus: (1) SUNY General Education Requirement courses; and (2) transfer path foundational major courses, as well as associated cognate courses.

- Each SUNY campus will limit its degree requirements to 64 credits for A.A., A.S., and A.A.S. degrees, and 126 credits for bachelor's degrees, unless there is a compelling justification for additional credits, and ensure that local graduation requirements that exceed the SUNY General Education Requirement do not cause a student to exceed those credit limits.

The resolution also calls for the State University Provost to develop methods to enable students to successfully complete transfer path courses at another SUNY campus when such courses are not offered at their home campus.