

Draft Report from Undergraduate Academic Requirements Committee (UARC) regarding Reconsideration of Hunter Policies Related to Course Transfers

The UARC was asked to review several of its policies related to the acceptability at Hunter of courses taken by transfer students at other institutions. This review comes in light of recent pressure by the CUNY Office of the University Registrar seeking to override Hunter's existing policies, all of which were approved in the past by the Hunter Senate or developed with Senate participation. The policies and the discussion about each policy issue are as follows:

1) Maximum number of credits students may transfer to Hunter.

The Hunter Senate has previously passed limitations to the maximum number of transfer credits a student may count toward the Hunter undergraduate degree and has discussed this issue on multiple occasions over several years. These policies are also printed/posted clearly in the Hunter catalog. These limits are: a) 70 credits for student transferring from either CUNY community colleges or non-CUNY institutions, and b) 90 credits for students transferring from other CUNY senior colleges. Furthermore, Hunter has a residency requirement that specifies that at least half of the credits applied to the student's major must be taken at Hunter. (See Appendix I)

During its meeting on October 18, 2018, the UARC discussed the pragmatics and pedagogical value of the existing limits and found no reason why these limits should currently be re-evaluated. The committee was particularly concerned with the fact that the Hunter community has previously considered the question of transfer credits in light of the defining characteristics and qualities of a Hunter education. Previously, this committee and the Senate have opted to strike a fair balance between having more stringent control over the courses a student graduating from Hunter must take to have a Hunter degree, on the one hand, and the need to alleviate residency requirements to allow transfer students to more easily come to Hunter, on the other hand. Out of these considerations emerged the above credit limits. The UARC feels that the conditions and requirements regarding the reasons for our current transfer credit limits have not changed and, more, these limits are important to the character of the Hunter educational experience. Therefore, despite recent pressure from the CUNY Registrar to override this rule and allow students to transfer greater numbers of credits, we uphold our current policies. The CUNY Registrar's attempt to override our policies and Governance procedures is not warranted. However, where special conditions may exist, students may file an appeal to the Senate Chair, who shall serve as the Hunter Transfer Appeals Officer, for reconsideration of the number of transfer credits accepted by Hunter. Note that academic departments handle issues pertaining to residency requirement for the major.

- 2) Policy related to the minimum grade requirement for courses to be accepted by Hunter for transfer credit.** In October 1999, and again in May 2008 and September 2008, the Hunter Senate reaffirmed the college's current grading system. As a result of these deliberations, the grades of C-, D+ and D- are not recognized as official grades at Hunter and grades below the D grade are treated as non-passing grades. The UARC discussed this policy as well as the current Hunter policy stating that grades below C will not transfer from non-CUNY schools and grades below D will not transfer from CUNY schools. The CUNY Registrar has requested that Hunter accept the exact grade that students transfer from other CUNY colleges, including C-, D+ and D- grades. After reviewing current Hunter policies and discussing the matter, the UARC found no good reason for our current policies to change. Additionally, the UARC agreed that the Hunter Senate's past decisions on these matters constitute an important component of Hunter's identity as an academic institution. Further, the committee feels that as long as these policies continue to apply at Hunter, it is appropriate that they be applied equally to all students working toward a final degree at Hunter. In keeping with Hunter's Governance-approved practices, grades below C (including C- grades and all below) shall not be accepted from non-CUNY schools and grades below D (including the D- and F grades) shall not be accepted from CUNY schools upon transfer.
- 3) Policy related to transfer credit for courses that fall outside of the Hunter College curriculum, or for which no equivalent course of study exists at Hunter.** In 2015, a list of CUNY courses associated with courses of study that fall outside of the College's curriculum was created by an ad hoc task force that included the Senate Chair, Arts and Sciences Dean's Office, Provost's Office, Registrar's Office, and others. It was determined that these are courses that are not germane to a Hunter education and therefore should not be accepted for transfer credit. The CUNY Registrar has requested that Hunter accept all courses transferred from a CUNY school regardless of their fit or relevance to the college or to its degree. The UARC discussed this matter and found that it is appropriate for the college to reject courses for transfer if those courses do not appropriately count toward a Hunter degree or fit within the mission and curriculum of the college. Further, the committee expressed that transfer students can and should understand that all of their courses will not necessarily transfer to a particular college when selecting a college to attend. A key concern here again is college identity and maintaining the meaning and integrity of our academic programs--and ultimately, of the degree--offered at Hunter. As a result, UARC discussion suggested that Hunter should continue to accept only those transfer credits for courses that align with existing Hunter courses of study and/or with the curriculum as a whole.

Going forward, to better address the above issues, the committee recommends two administrative courses of action:

- 1) **Hunter should continue the current practice of including on the acceptance letter sent to transfer students an itemized list of the courses that do not meet the grade cut-off requirement (related to item 2 above) and that do not align with the Hunter curriculum (item 3 above) with an explanation that the courses listed will not be accepted for transfer. This letter should also reiterate that there are limits to the number of transfer credits that can be accepted by Hunter (related to item 1 above). This measure gives students an opportunity for advance due diligence before they decide to enroll at Hunter.**

- 2) **The Hunter Senate Chair shall serve as the Transfer Appeals Officer for the college. Students may file an appeal if they feel the rules have been misapplied in their case, or that their circumstances merit special consideration. Such consideration shall focus on academic justifications (e.g. a rejected course actually has academic merit and should be recognized at Hunter) rather than practical ones (e.g. the student wants to graduate sooner and/or simply transfer all credits earned at another school).**

Appendix I- Catalog Language

Transfer (Advanced Standing) Admission

Students who attended a regionally accredited college or university after graduation from high school must file a CUNY Transfer (Advanced Standing) application. Transfer applicants are considered for admission with advanced standing if they have a minimum of a 2.5 average; some programs may be higher. Applicants with fewer than 24 credits must also satisfy freshman admission criteria.

Nondegree students who are in attendance at Hunter College as well as those who were previously enrolled, in addition to meeting the above stated criteria, must have had a minimum grade point average of 2.0 in their Hunter coursework.

Transfer admissions decisions and determinations of advanced standing are made by the Hunter College Admissions Office on the basis of work done as a matriculated student at regionally accredited two- and four-year colleges and universities. Only courses in which a student has earned a grade of C or better (D from CUNY colleges) can be accepted for transfer. Transfer credit will not be granted for any remedial, developmental or ESL coursework.

Graduate coursework is not transferrable to the undergraduate degree program.

Transfer students from CUNY community colleges who have earned an AA or AS degree are admitted to the college, awarded junior status and considered to have satisfied core course requirements. However, depending upon the major selected at Hunter, some students may need more than 60 additional credits in order to complete Hunter's bachelor's degree requirements. Transfer students from CUNY colleges who have not earned a two-year AA or AS degree and transfer students from non-CUNY colleges are awarded credit for previous work on a course-by-course basis. All transfer students, including those entering with CUNY AA and AS degrees, must fulfill the college's foreign language and Pluralism and Diversity, and Writing requirements.

The maximum total number of credits that may be transferred to Hunter College is 90. There is a 70-credit limit on the number of credits that may be transferred from two-year institutions.

Applicants are required to report and provide transcripts for all previous college coursework including coursework that was in progress at the time of application. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action and the denial of transfer credit.

Transfer Students from CUNY Community Colleges

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Requirements for a Major

All matriculated students must declare a major no later than the semester in which the combination of credits earned and credits for which they are currently registered totals 60 or greater. Transfer students entering with 60 credits or more must declare their major before the end of their first semester of attendance at Hunter. Students may find that some courses and career opportunities are available to them only if they have declared a major. In addition, under New York State guidelines, students who have not yet declared a major by the 60-credit point, or changed their major/program, by the end of the drop/add period of the semester are ineligible for TAP financial aid. To declare or change a major, students should print a Major Declaration Approval form at registrar.hunter.cuny.edu/subpages/forms.shtml, and confer with an adviser in the major department.

For students who are nearing the 61-credit point and remain undecided about their choice of major, there are a number of avenues of assistance. Designated faculty in each academic department advise prospective majors about the undergraduate programs and related career possibilities. Also, the counselors in the Office of Student Services and Career Development Services offer assistance in choosing a major. The college is concerned that students select their major with careful consideration and with good knowledge of the range of options.

To earn a Hunter degree, students must complete at least half of their major credits at Hunter.