



UTAH SYSTEM OF
HIGHER EDUCATION

Interim Higher Education
Appropriations Subcommittee
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Addressing “Major Creep” in USHE Institutions

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What is “Major Creep” and Why Does It Matter?

- Baccalaureate Degree = 120 -126 semester hours (s.h.) minimum (by USHE policy and regional accreditation standards)
- Baccalaureate Degrees consists of :
 - General Education (minimum 30 s.h.)
 - Degree Requirements (e.g., B.A., B.S., BFA)
 - Major

What is “Major Creep” and Why Does It Matter?

- Increase in number of credits required for majors



Increases in total number of credit hours to complete a program

- “Creep” of junior and senior level (upper division) courses into requirements for the sophomore year

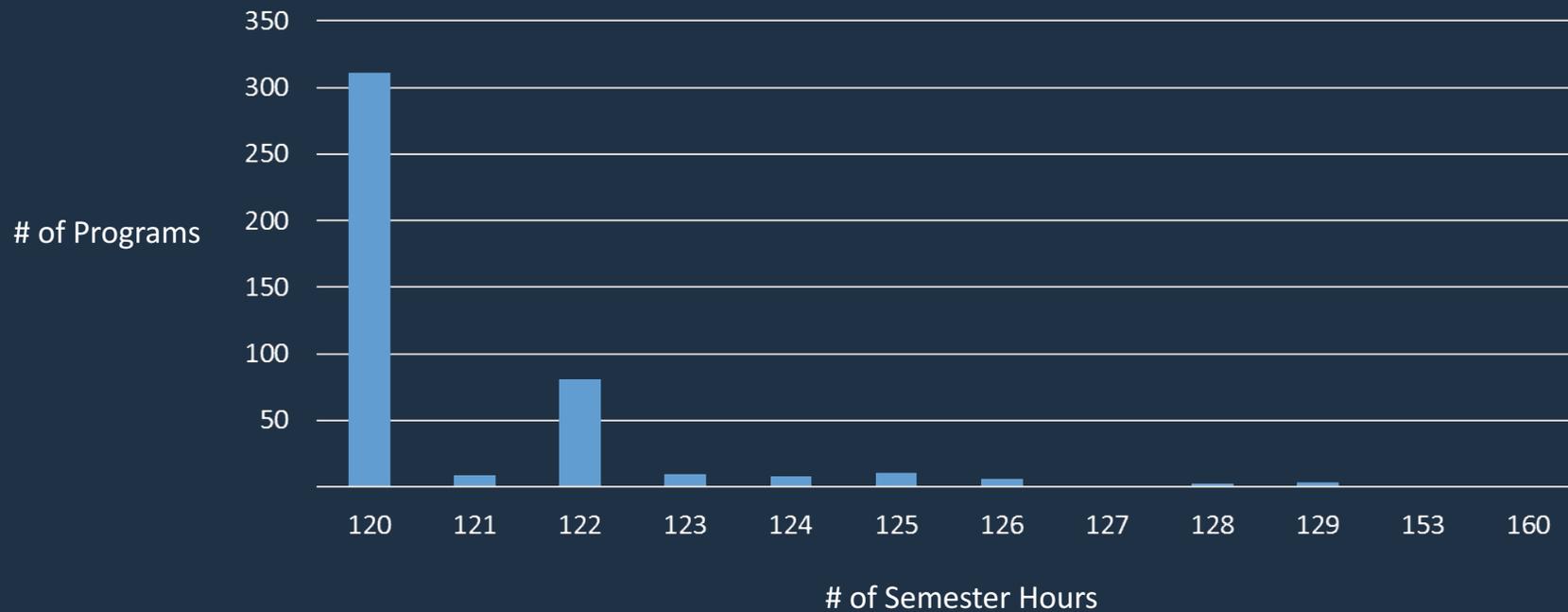


Increases in of number of hours to completion for TRANSFER students

Concerns Raised and USHE/Institution Actions

- Salt Lake Community College raised issue over a year ago.
- Brought to the attention of Chief Academic Officers/Action Strategy Identified
 - Institutional Analysis of Problem at Each USHE Institution
 - September 2016: Clarification of Course Number Policy Needed for Institutional Guidance
 - Ongoing New and Existing Program Review for “Major Creep”

USHE Bachelor's Degrees by Number of Required Hours (Minimum 120-126)



University of Utah

Martha Bradley
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Examining where we were. . .

- Inventory of 2000 and 3000 level-classes and where 3000-level classes were required in the sophomore year.
- Inventory of the total number of credit hours required for all majors. Found most of those above 122 were in professional majors that required more credits to satisfy accreditation requirements.

U of U “Plan to Finish”

- Encouraged departments to reconsider requirements so that students could complete in four years. Among those who trimmed programs were:
 - Elementary Education: 153 credits to 122
 - Computer Science: 129 -122
 - Electrical and Computer Engineering: 127-129 to 124.5
 - Geological Engineering: 148 -143
 - Special Education: 148 -143
 - Theater, BA & BFA & Theater Teaching: 122-139 to 122

Taking advantage of existing review processes. . .

- Review of new program proposals can result in requests to:
 - Adjust course numbers to appropriately number classes designed for sophomores, juniors and seniors.
 - Reduce the total number of credit hours.
- Checks on the above at the seven-year program review, with examination of learning outcomes and assessment plans that helps to tie learning outcomes to appropriate total credit hours.

Work with the colleges. . .

- Working with deans and their advising teams and chairs to talk about their curriculum and possible articulation issues SLCC students face at transfer.
 - Colleges of Social and Behavioral Science, Humanities, Education, Mines and Engineering



WEBER STATE
UNIVERSITY



June 2016 → Sept 2017

- June 2016: 97 Majors (including different emphases in the same major) require upper-division work prior to the junior year.
- Sept 2017: 76 Majors (including different emphases in the same major) require upper-division work prior to the junior year.



Status Update

- 5 majors deleted from 2016-2017.
- 16 majors deleted upper division requirements in first two years of the program
- Of the 76 majors requiring some upper-division before the junior year:
 - 31 require one course;
 - 22 require two courses;
 - 23 require three courses or more.



Some sample degrees maps changes

- BS Botany (Track C)—no longer requires any upper-division in first two years.
- BA with a Communication Major/Public Relations & Advertising Emphasis—reduced to one required 3000-level course: Theory
- BA Theatre Arts/Theatre Arts Generalist—reduced to one required 3000-level course: Intro to Shakespeare.

