

Modesto Junior College
Academic Senate
Resolution: F18-E
Standard for Determining Unit Values at Modesto Junior College

Proposed by: the MJC Academic Senate Executive Committee

Whereas: Over the past 5 years, we have engaged in an important but often contested discussion over what constitutes an appropriate unit load for any given course;

Whereas: The MJC Academic Senate recognizes that unit load can present major roadblocks to student completion and success;

Whereas: Student load is a result of student behavior AND course, program, and institutional design.

Whereas: At the state-level, disciplines created transfer model curriculum (TMC's) that often account for all major and General Education (G.E.) units in such a structured and restrictive way that to meet the 60 unit maximum, courses used as major requirements must be double-counted as general education courses;

Whereas: An important goal of the California Community College Chancellor's Office "Vision for Success" is to "Decrease the number of units accumulated by students earning associate degrees to an average of 79 units" versus the current 87 unit statewide average (p. 2, 11, 12, 16);

Whereas: Modesto Junior College unit load average is 82, well below the statewide average as noted in the Data Discussion Institute Day, Spring 2019;

Whereas: The California Community College Chancellor's Office "Vision for Success" attributes accumulated units to a lack of clear guidance, leading students to take courses not in their major, either for purposes of exploration or because they could not get the courses they need in their major, and poorly designed assessment of students' skills, resulting in placement into "years-long remedial sequences" (11, 29, 31);

Whereas: At the course, program, and institutional level, implementation of AB 705, self-guided placement policies, and our work in Guided Pathways seek to address problem of excess unit load:

Whereas: The MJC Academic Senate recognizes the responsibility of faculty to design curriculum AND Institutions to design processes to address concerns noted above;

Whereas: The MJC Academic Senate emphasizes that curriculum and unit value discussions are student-centered, but that some flexibility in curricular and unit design is a desired quality that best serves our students by providing them with the additional contact with instructor and subject matter that supports their success;

Whereas: State laws, rules, and regulations, and YCCD Board Policy recognize faculty as experts in their disciplines and entrust them with determining curricular matters within their discipline;

Whereas: The Academic Senate depends on discipline faculty to make determinations on issues of equivalency, on determining minimum qualification, on issues of hiring, and on writing course outlines of record for that discipline, etc.;

Whereas: Prior to the implementation of AB 705, guided self-placement, and Guided Pathways, the Academic Senate on [April 16, 2015](#) (also see [April 2, 2015](#)) upheld the Curriculum Committee's Curriculum Review Process for settling disputes over courses with contested unit values, but did not create a policy or standard that actually states the faculty position regarding unit values;

Whereas: The minimum unit field of a C-ID descriptor is meant to clarify the minimum units a course must have and not declare maximum units allowed for a course.

Whereas: Community Colleges are held to AB 705 Guidelines, not CSUs or UCs;

Therefore: Be it resolved, that the official position the Academic Senate is that the standard unit value for courses intended for general education will be the unit value on the C-ID descriptor in the "minimum unit" field **OR** the median unit value among California Community Colleges if higher than the C-ID minimum;

Therefore: Be it further resolved, that the official position the Academic Senate is that the unit value determination of discipline faculty shall be observed for discipline courses solely within the ADT(s) of their discipline, provided that **at least** two courses of comparable unit **value or comparable contact hours are offered at CSUs OR UCs, OR** absent comparable courses, match the median unit value among California Community Colleges;

Therefore: Be it further resolved, that in cases where a course meets a major requirement in two or more ADTs and the course update includes a change in units, that the discipline writing or reviewing the course outline of record **MUST** notify any other affected discipline before it can determine a unit value above the minimum units stated on the C-ID descriptor for that course. Programs with an ADT impacted by credit-unit value change **MUST** be given at least three (3) days notification prior to the Curriculum Committee meeting at which the change in credit-unit value is to be considered.

Therefore: Be it further resolved, that in the above cases where the discipline experts make a determination that a **TWO-THIRDS** vote of the Curriculum Committee would be required to overturn that determination, unless there is a federal or state education law or regulation which would make the high credit-unit value course non-compliant.

Therefore: Be it further resolved, that this policy will be reviewed and updated as needed spring 2021 to ensure that the California Community College Chancellor's Vision to reduce unit load to 79 by 2022 is met through ongoing changes to courses, programs, and processes at the institutional level.