

From jtenenbg@u.washington.edu Mon Jun 5 09:18:17 2006

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From: Josh Tenenberg <jtenenbg@u.washington.edu>

To: CSS Undergraduate Committee -- S. Chung <chungsa@u.washington.edu>, D. Chinn <dchinn@u.washington.edu>, Josh Tenenberg <jtenenbg@u.washington.edu>, K.

Subject: Important: implementing the programming placement policy

Undergrad committee,

Here is my understanding of what we worked out at our last meeting to implement the new programming placement policy:

<https://depts.washington.edu/techdocs/policies/cssProgrammingPlacement.pdf>

1. We will have the following AP exam policy:  
Credit for 142: at least 4 on CS A exam, at least 3 on CS B exam  
Credit for 143: at least 4 on CS B exam
2. We will do some form of self- and advisor- programming assessment for each incoming transfer student. This may include the student taking one of the old placement exams, as indicated in the new policy. The new undergraduate coordinator and the advisors will work together to determine how to best implement this policy given pragmatic constraints.
3. Our "initial list" of courses that are equivalent to 142 and 143 will include:
  - a. The courses that UW Seattle CSE currently views as equivalent to their 142 and 143. These can be found at:  
[http://www.cs.washington.edu/outreach/CC/cc\\_student\\_142\\_transfer\\_list.htm](http://www.cs.washington.edu/outreach/CC/cc_student_142_transfer_list.htm)
  - b. Courses that ex-Faculty Fellows developed to be equivalent to our 142 and 143.
4. We will NOT be using the list from the sheet called "Feeder College Course Offered as CSE 142/143 Equivalents", as this was put together by the State Board and was never approved by the CSS faculty. Advisors were instructed several times not to use this as being literally equivalent.
5. We will use our "initial list" immediately.
6. For subsequent additions to the equivalency list, the following documentation will be requested from the transfer institution:
  - a. Course Outcomes (sometimes called "Master Course Outline", "Course Outcome Guide", "Course Adoption Form", or similar, depending on the institution). This documentation should describe expected outcomes regardless of who teaches the course.
  - b. A sample course syllabus, which should include the title and authors of required texts and indicate the assigned chapters.
  - c. If not included in the syllabus, a document that provides a brief description of each assignment. This document should allow the evaluation of the breadth and depth of the material covered.
  - d. Two programming assignments (the specifications given to students) assigned late in the term whose completion would demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes.
  - e. Sample final exam.
7. Determinations of equivalency will be valid for three years except for the initial list, or until either party believes that another determination is warranted. This will generally be due to changes in curricula at UWT or the transfer institution.
8. Institutions on the initial list will be requested to provide the above documentation by January 1, 2007, after which a determination will be made concerning equivalency by the undergraduate committee prior to the end of the 2006-07 academic year.

The above is my understanding of what we agreed to at our last meeting. Please email to all of us immediately if you believe that this does not correctly or completely capture our conversation.

I did yet one more close reading of the policy that we adopted, and have the following comments related to implementing the policy and the above decisions. I recommend that the rest of you take a close look as well.

- o Where the policy we adopted says "A student with a transcribed passing grade in a 142-equivalent class, taken within the past three years, will be allowed to enroll in TCSS143.", I assume what we mean by "passing grade" is at least a 2.0, since this is what we take for our own students as qualifying them to "pass" into the next courses. Similarly for 143-equivalent classes.
- o Where the above says:  
"Courses that ex-Faculty Fellows developed to be equivalent to our 142 and 143."  
the next undergraduate coordinator and the lead advisor will determine how best to make this determination. I will provide input for any such courses that I know of.

Also, based on my latest reading, I think that the decisions above overstepped our charge a bit. I take the lion's share of the responsibility for this - it was both my careless reading and wishful thinking.

- o Our policy has no "sunset" provision for being added to the 142- and 143- equivalency lists (i.e. our 3 year span from point 7 above). It is not unreasonable, but it is an "add on" to the policy, and so should probably be discussed with the full faculty before being implemented (and announced to transfer institutions).
- o The policy states that institutions get added to the equivalency list only when triggered by a student petition. "In the case of an argument based on relevant coursework, the student is responsible for supplying written documentation sufficient to allow the undergraduate committee to judge whether the course is equivalent (according to the standards listed above). If the course is judged to be equivalent, it will automatically be added to the equivalency list."

What I believe this obliges us to do is to NOT implement our bottom 3 points above (points 6-8). If next year's undergraduate committee thinks that they should be implemented, then it should be brought back to the full faculty. In the meanwhile, this makes the policy both liberal (i.e. it is easy to get on the list) and fairly lightweight to implement: no documentation to collect, no negotiations with community colleges, no re-determinations of equivalency for the initial list, and no determinations of equivalency for new institutions unless

triggered by a student petition.

Please let me know asap if you disagree with this interpretation of the policy that we actually approved as a full faculty.

What I will be doing is to hand this issue over to my successor as undergrad coordinator and the lead advisor (which is why they are cc'd on this message) to work out together over the summer and with next year's undergrad committee.

Thanks,

Josh

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