

I would appreciate you taking a few moments to review the concerns below regarding District Administrative Procedure (AP) 4025. (Yes, it is lengthy, but I believe the issue warrants a thorough discussion.)

District Administrative Procedure AP 4025 requires students to complete a minimum of six semester units in their major in residence within the San Diego Community College District (SDCCD) for an associate degree to be awarded. In addition, students must complete 12 associate degree-applicable semester units in residence within SDCCD. My comments specifically address the requirement to complete six semester units in the major in residence.

I believe this policy no longer serves students effectively and has become an unnecessary barrier to degree completion. I have worked with many students who have met all degree requirements but are unable to earn their local AA or AS degree solely because they do not satisfy this residency requirement in their major.

SDCCD has already taken an important step toward reducing barriers by revising the previous policy that required students to complete 12 residency units at the specific college awarding the degree. That change eliminated situations where students had to enroll in unnecessary coursework simply to satisfy a residency requirement. I appreciate that improvement and respectfully ask that the District now review the six-unit residency requirement within the major for the same reason.

With the continued expansion of Credit for Prior Learning (CPL), Associate Degrees for Transfer (ADTs), inter-institutional mobility, and other student-centered initiatives, this requirement has become increasingly outdated. Students today often complete coursework through multiple colleges, earn credit through CPL, or transfer between institutions while still meeting all academic learning outcomes. Requiring an additional six units in the major at SDCCD can delay graduation, increase costs, and force students to complete coursework that is not academically necessary.

Additionally, neighboring community college districts, including Southwestern College and Palomar College, do not impose this same barrier, allowing students greater flexibility to complete their degrees without compromising academic standards.

Below are two examples that demonstrate why this policy should be reconsidered and how it negatively impacts students under current educational practices.

Example 1: Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) versus Transfer Credit

A student who completes an EMT program at a non-accredited allied health training center may be awarded Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) through SDCCD based on an approved industry certification. Those CPL units count toward both the degree requirements and the six-unit residency requirement within the major. However, a student who completes the equivalent EMT coursework at an accredited college outside of SDCCD and transfers in articulated credit does not receive the same residency consideration, even though the coursework is equivalent and completed at an accredited institution. This creates an

inconsistency in how residency is applied and places transfer students at a disadvantage despite having completed comparable—or arguably more rigorous—academic coursework.

Example 2: Unequal Treatment of Local Degrees and ADTs

Students pursuing an Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) are only required to meet the district's general residency requirement. However, students pursuing a local AA or AS degree must satisfy both the general residency requirement and an additional six units within the major.

Consider a student who relocates because of military service, family obligations, divorce, employment, or another extenuating circumstance. If that student completes all major coursework at another accredited institution and the courses articulate directly to the local degree requirements, they have still fulfilled the curriculum established by SDCCD faculty. Yet, because of the six-unit major residency requirement, they may be required to take additional coursework that was never intended to be part of the degree simply to satisfy residency. They must then petition for course substitutions and hope those requests are approved.

This raises an important question: If students have successfully completed all required coursework, demonstrated the expected learning outcomes, and fulfilled the curriculum approved by faculty discipline experts, why should they be required to complete additional coursework solely because it was completed outside of SDCCD? This is especially difficult to justify when students earning CPL credit or pursuing ADTs are not held to the same standard.

Over the years, I have worked with numerous students affected by this policy and have collected many petitions and examples demonstrating its unintended consequences. I would be happy to share those cases if they would be helpful during a review of AP 4025. Ultimately, I ask the District to consider what educational purpose the six-unit major residency requirement continues to serve. If students have met all program learning outcomes, completed an articulated curriculum, and satisfied the district's overall residency requirement, this additional requirement appears to function as a procedural barrier rather than an academic safeguard.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I respectfully request that the District evaluate whether the six-unit residency requirement in the major remains necessary or whether it should be revised or eliminated to better support equitable student access, degree completion, and transfer success.

Isabella Ella,

Miramar College Counselor