112ᵗʰ Student Senate

of the University of South Carolina

Sponsored by Senator Windsor

A RECOMMENDATION
-TO-
IMPROVE CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT
TO PROVIDE ACCURATE DEGREE WORK AUDITS

WHEREAS, clear and transparent curricular information enables and empowers students to monitor their progression towards degree through sequenced major mapping and an accurate degree audit; and

WHEREAS, accurate DegreeWorks audits allow for students to become managers of their own progress and be advocates for questions and concerns that they have for their advisors, professors, and mentors for their personal academic and career paths; and

WHEREAS, students share responsibility for successful advising. As such, students must be able to access information to ensure their own success beyond one-on-one advising. As such, tools like DegreeWorks and the Academic Bulletin must be accurate and accessible. This enables students to be better advisees, and advisors to have meaningful conversations beyond coursework requirements; and

WHEREAS, not every school and college is equally utilizing or promoting DegreeWorks as a curriculum auditing resource for students to be able to view their updated degree progress. This poses a challenge for undergraduate students to prepare for their advising appointments and to create their academic plans. It also creates different and inequitable experiences and opportunities for students; and

WHEREAS, all First-Year Advisors/Undergraduate Academic Advisors use the DegreeWorks audit to ground the advisement session conversation and enter recommended course schedule in the notes field, allowing for both students and advisors to refer back to DegreeWorks notes for the advised list of courses to enroll in during registration. If their subsequent advisors are not using the same technology and process, this may prove confusing and frustrating for students; and

WHEREAS, because a single student may have multiple advisors, it is imperative that formal advisement does not deviate from an established and transparent curriculum. All advisors should work from uniform technologies, curricular tools, and comprehensive training; and

WHEREAS, the University Advising Center has established the goal for 100% of colleges/departments to invest in curriculum management (Major Maps and Bulletin updates), therefore leading to an accurate degree audit in DegreeWorks; and

WHEREAS, DegreeWorks Deployment Colleges, the Office of the Registrar, and the University Advising Center should collaborate to deploy DegreeWorks for all undergraduate programs and provide students and advisors with real-time degree audit information. Validation of content/curriculum in online sources (Bulletin, DegreeWorks, Major Maps) is the responsibility of the colleges as it requires curricula content experts; and

WHEREAS, the DegreeWorks degree audit is successfully used by students and advisors at the University of Florida, University of Texas, University of Alabama, University of Georgia, University of Kentucky, Texas A&M, and Clemson – all universities with large student populations and a large, diverse number of degree programs such as the University of South Carolina; and

WHEREAS, at UofSC the College of Hospitality, Retail, and Sports Management and the College of Education have successfully integrated DegreeWorks into their advising processes so that they have gone paperless with advising and students and advisors refer to the same and accurate degree audit and academic bulletin for reference; and

WHEREAS, according to the 2019 Academic Advising Student Survey, the majority (65%) of undergraduate students report that they use DegreeWorks to prepare for their advising appointments and the majority strongly agreed that they used it multiple times to monitor their progress towards graduation; and

WHEREAS, despite strong evidence of students' use of degree works, students have reported that their DegreeWorks audits are not accurate. Students have also been told in some colleges to ignore DegreeWorks. There are still colleges that only use paper advising documents, which are not reliable especially for mostly online advising appointments. These paper forms are not accessible and transparent for students' use; and

WHEREAS, accurate degree audits are necessary to monitor academic progress toward degree and requirements for all students and especially specific student populations such as student athletes, federal aid or scholarship recipients, and veteran benefit recipients; and

WHEREAS, without accurate degree work audits by colleges and schools, students may be at risk of not fulfilling certain academic requirements, thus prolonging graduation and increasing any required payments or loans to pay for higher education; and

WHEREAS, accurate DegreeWorks audits would fulfill the 1st Strategic Priority that states the goal to recruit, retain and graduate high-achieving students. Likewise, it would accomplish the 5th Strategic Priority that outlines goals to develop efficient and collaborative models and management that maximizes accessibility for students; and

NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RECOMMENDED by the 112th Student Senate

THAT, all colleges and schools work to establish more transparent and streamlined curriculum and major mapping information in order to provide a more accurate online degree audit; and

THAT, all college and school faculty better collaborate with the University Advising Center to display transparent curriculum (including any applicability circumstances) in the official University academic bulletin and manage curriculum into clear major maps, so that it can be more easily input into the Degree Works system with the University Registrar; and

THAT, all colleges and departments eliminate internal curriculum documents, information sheets, and online information that do not align with approved and published curriculum in the Academic Bulletin; and

THAT, all colleges and schools utilize DegreeWorks technologies so that all undergraduate students are provided accurate and accessible online degree audits; and

THAT, all colleges and schools adopt a more uniform and standardized method of auditing and monitoring a student's academic progress, so that students can always access their online audits, updated academic information, and more easily change or adapt their degree plans.

BE IT FURTHER RECOMMENDED that upon passage copies are to be sent to the Board of Trustees; Robert L. Caslen Jr., University President; Dr. Dennis Pruitt, Vice President for Student

Affairs, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs; Dr. Anna Edwards, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs; Aaron Marterer, University Registrar; Claire Robinson, Director of University Advising Center; Jenn Tilford, Director of Undergraduate Curriculum Management; Dr. Joel Samuels, Interim Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences; Dr. Peter Brews, Dean of the Moore School of Business; Dr. Jon Pederson, Dean of College of Education; Dr. Hossein Haj-Hariri, Dean of Engineering and Computing; Dr. Matt Brown, Interim Dean of Hospitality, Retail and Sports Management; Dr. William Hubbard, Dean of School of Law; Dr. Tom Reichert, Dean of Information and Communications; Dr. Tayloe Harding, Dean of School of Music; Dr. Jeannette Andrews, Dean of College of Nursing; Dr. G. Thomas Chandler, Dean of Norman J. Arnold of Public Health; Dr. Ronald Pitner, Interim Dean of College of Social Work; Dr. Cherly Addy, Dean of Graduate School; Dr. Steven Lynn, Dean of South Carolina Honors College; Issy Rushton, Student Body President; and The Daily Gamecock.

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JD Jacobus, Speaker of the Student Senate   Date