



Robert C. May
Telephone: (510) 987-0711
Email: robert.may@ucop.edu

*Chair of the Assembly of the Academic Senate
Faculty Representative to the Regents
University of California
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
Oakland, California 94607-5200*

May 10, 2019

**JANET NAPOLITANO, PRESIDENT
MICHAEL BROWN, PROVOST AND EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA**

Re: Assembly-approved revisions to Senate Regulation 424.A.3 (Area D)

Dear Janet and Michael,

In February 2018, the Assembly of the Academic Senate approved [revisions to Senate Regulation 424.A.3](#), proposed by BOARS, related to the Area D (laboratory science) requirement for freshman admission. The revisions increase the minimum Area D requirement from 2 units to 3 units (3 units are currently recommended), while continuing to require 2 units of coursework that “provide basic knowledge in at least two of the fundamental disciplines of biology, chemistry, and physics”. The amendments also change the name of the Area D requirement from “Laboratory Science” to “Science” to reflect the broader range of science disciplines to be accepted for the third unit under Area D. In addition, BOARS approved a modification to the A-G Guide to include specific examples of courses that may fulfill the third unit requirement not explicitly mentioned in the Senate regulations, such as engineering, and computer science. These changes are consistent with the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) adopted by the State of California.

After its approval by the Assembly, the Senate’s recommendation on Area D was placed on hold by the Administration over reservations about how one of its key elements – increasing the D requirement from 2 to 3 units – could affect the diversity of the UC eligibility and applicant pools. The Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) is currently undertaking an eligibility study to determine what effect if any the change would have.

The Academic Senate supports further study of these concerns, but wants the University to move ahead with approval and implementation of the other components of the proposal. In March, BOARS resubmitted the proposed revisions as three separate items for Assembly approval. At its April 10, 2019 meeting, the Assembly [approved](#) the three items in separate motions, noted below.

1. Rename the area d requirement from “laboratory science” to “science”.
2. Endorse the expanded course list approved by BOARS.

(These motions carried unanimously.)

3. Encourage the administration to increase the course requirements from 2+1 recommended, to 3, in keeping with the NGSS.

This motion carried in a vote of 36 in favor, 11 opposed, with 5 abstentions.

The Senate believes this course of action will allow for additional study about the potential effect of the new policy on access for disadvantaged and underrepresented populations, while enabling renaming of the requirement, and the expansion of approved courses to proceed. In the meantime, the Area D requirement will remain at two years of coursework required, and three years recommended. BOARS' approval of updated evaluation guidelines in the A-G Guide expand the courses eligible for approval in Area D as the third recommended year. Under the expanded course list, students will continue to be required to take two courses from biology, chemistry, physics, or integrated versions of these foundational disciplines. They can then take a recommended third science course from any and all approved Area D courses, which now includes the expanded list.

The Academic Senate shares your commitment to access, equity, and inclusion, and believes its recommendation on Area D was based on thoughtful analysis and a carefully considered determination that the policy would be in the best educational interest of students and the University, and would have minimal, if any, adverse effects on disadvantaged and underrepresented students. We look forward to working with you to further evaluate and address these concerns.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have additional questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in brown ink, appearing to read "R. C. May".

Robert C. May, Chair
Academic Council

Encl.

Cc: Academic Council
Senate Directors