Texas A&M University

Zachry Department of Civil Engineering

Undergraduate Student Services

Policy on Closet Majors

1. Introduction and Policy Goals
Many students find after some period in the Civil Engineering Department that their academic goals will be better fulfilled in another major. However, standard practice in many departments on the Texas A&M campus often requires a semester’s worth of specified courses and acceptable performance before a change of curriculum (a.k.a., major change) is approved. Unfortunately, this requirement places students wishing to change majors into a state of limbo without an academic home department. Because this status will typically lead to anxiety, it is in the best interest of the individual student and the university at large to provide incentives to minimize the duration of this intermediate state between majors. Moreover, for cases where a student may desire to leave Civil Engineering or Ocean Engineering based on misunderstandings or imperfect information, it is desirable for students to discuss their plans with the Department before initiating a major change.

For these reasons, the Closet Major Policy described below has been designed with the following goals:

- No student should initiate a change of curriculum process that does not have approval by the new major without advisement from the Undergraduate Student Services Office.
- A student engaged in a change of curriculum process to leave the Civil Engineering or Ocean Engineering major should be given a period of reprieve to prepare for a new major without having to deal with dismissal from the Civil Engineering Departmental “home.”
- The period of reprieve described in the above goal should be designed for minimal duration and to encourage all possible forethought.

2. Closet Major Definition
A closet major is a student who has begun the process of changing to a major outside of CVEN/CVEL or OCEN/OCEL but has not been formally accepted into the new major and has been officially recognized as a closet major by the Undergraduate Student Services Office. A closet major will typically take some or all of her/his courses outside of the CVEN or OCEN curriculum as appropriate to fulfill requirements of the desired new major. Once recognized as closet majors, students are not required to participate in advising or other activities required of CVEN and OCEN students. Instead they must seek advice from advisors in the program they wish to enter, when that is possible.

A student who has not been officially recognized as a closet major according to the procedures described below is expected to comply with all normal CVEN and OCEN policies and procedures including advising, academic
performance standards (i.e., grades), and course selections. Students who schedule courses outside the CVEN or OCEN curriculum without obtaining closet major status may be blocked from continued enrollment in the Civil Engineering department for failure to make satisfactory progress toward the degree.

A student who has been formally admitted to a new major will thus immediately leave CVEN or OCEN and will not be in closet major status.

3. Terms of Closet Major Status
   3.1. A CVEN or OCEN closet major will be allowed that status for one semester only, unless granted permission for a second semester by the Director of Undergraduate Student Services. Such exceptions will be granted for severe circumstances only (e.g., medical or family emergencies). Failure to meet conditions set by the desired new major will not qualify for extension of status.
   3.2. A CVEN or OCEN closet major is individually and fully responsible for obtaining advising for her/his desired new major. The Civil Engineering Department will not provide such advising.
   3.3. At the beginning of the semester after the closet major semester, the Civil Engineering Department will place a closet major block on the student’s registration status. This block will only be removed upon request by a major that has accepted the student. To be clear, if a student has not been accepted into a new major immediately after the end of the closet major semester, he/she will be unable to register for any class at Texas A&M University. Summer semesters will be included if the student is not enrolled in TAMU classes during any one of the summer sessions; otherwise, summer semesters will not be included.
   3.4. A student will only be admitted to closet major status after a scheduled advising appointment with a member of the Civil Engineering Undergraduate Student Services staff and submission of a signed copy of the “Acceptance of Terms: Closet Major Status” form appended below. This form will be entered into the student’s advising file.
   3.5. Closet major terms do not alter in any way other academic deficiency issues such as scholastic probation, among others. Failure to meet other performance expectations or probationary terms may result in dismissal, removal from classes, and other sanctions, aside from closet major terms.

4. Procedure for Entering Closet Major Status
   The following procedure should be followed by a student wishing to enter closet major status. Failure to do so may be grounds for refusal of such status by the Civil Engineering Department.
   4.1. At the beginning of consideration of a major change, a student should consult with her/his assigned advisor, staff in the Undergraduate Student Services Office, course instructors, and other knowledgeable individuals about their academic circumstances and career goals. Freshman students should be especially aware that it is common for students to find university courses in engineering, math, and sciences difficult compared to high school, and that many students doubt themselves at this time; however, focused improvement of study and time-management skills leads to improved grades and self-confidence.
4.2. If after the above consultation a student still desires to change major, she/he should meet with an advisor in the new major department to learn the exact process and requirements to enter the new major. If more than one new major is being considered, the student should repeat this task with each potential program.

4.3. Once a student has decided on a specific new major to which to apply:

4.3.1. If the new major offers immediate acceptance (including acceptance at the end of the current semester), the student does not need to proceed with CVEN or OCEN closet major status.

4.3.2. If the new major does not offer immediate acceptance, the student should complete the “Acceptance of Terms: Closet Major Status” form and schedule an appointment with an advisor on the USSO staff (Bartoskewitz, Brumbelow, Donaway, or Lowery) for approval.

4.4. Upon entering closet major status, the student becomes responsible for determining appropriate courses to take and should do so with advice from her/his desired new major.

4.5. At the beginning of the semester after the closet major semester, the Civil Engineering Department will place a closet major block on the student’s registration status. This block will only be removed upon request by a major that has accepted the student. Once this is done, the student will have no future interactions with the Civil Engineering Department.

5. Form to be Submitted

The form “Acceptance of Terms: Closet Major Status” is appended to the end of this document.

Policy Revised 11/2012

K. Brumberlow
Acceptance of Terms: Closet Major Status
Zachry Department of Civil Engineering
Texas A&M University

I am currently a Zachry Department of Civil Engineering CVEN OCEN CVEL OCEL (circle one) major and request to be accepted as a "Closet Major" for a one-semester period only, during which time I will be taking non-CVEN or OCEN classes. I understand that by not continuing to take CVEN/OCEN classes I am effectively leaving the Department, and am working towards entering another field of study. I also understand that the CVEN Department will allow me to remain a Closet Major for a single semester only, and that whether or not I am successful in getting into some other major at the end of ONE semester, I will under no condition be allowed to further register for either Civil Engineering classes nor other classes as a Closet Major under Civil Engineering.

I understand that I take complete responsibility for finding a new major that will accept me after the end of the Closet Major semester, and understand that Civil Engineering advisors are not conversant with the entry requirements for other departments and will thus be unable to advise me regarding what classes my new department would have me take for admission into their program.

I also agree that if I am currently on probation and seriously fail to make my terms of probation at the end of the current semester, my Closet Major status can be withdrawn and I give the CVEN Department the full right to drop my classes. In this instance, I am still permitted to look elsewhere for a new major, but will no longer be permitted to register for classes under Civil Engineering Closet Major status.

I further understand that this is a request only, to be considered by the Civil Engineering Department, which will not be processed until the Head of Student Services gives his approval. You will be notified within 3 days of submission of his decision.

I have read the Policy on Closet Majors in full and understand all aspects of the policy.

I testify that the information I have submitted with this request is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

I am currently on Academic Probation with the Department of Civil Engineering: Yes No

I am currently on Scholastic Probation with Texas A&M University: Yes No

Printed Name ___________________________________________ Student ID ___________

Email address ____________________________________________

Signed _________________________________________________ Date ______________

Signed by Civil Engineering _______________________________ Date ______________