

**The University Senate of Michigan Technological University**

**Proposal 27-22**

(Voting Units: Academic)

**Proposal to Modify Senate Policy 413.1:**

**ACCELERATED MASTER'S PROGRAMS**

- 1. Date:** November 28, 2021
  
- 2. Proposer:** Yu Cai <cai@mtu.edu>, Applied Computing;  
Paniz Khanmohammadi Hazaveh <pkhanmoh@mtu.edu>, Applied Computing;

**3. Rationale**

The current Senate Policy 413.1 on Accelerated Master's programs requires students to complete a minimum of 150 total credits for the bachelor's and master's combined. This proposal seeks to amend the current policy by removing the following sentence: "Accelerated master's programs must require students to complete a minimum of 150 total credits for the bachelor's and master's combined."

Typically, a BS degree at Michigan Tech requires 120+ credits and a MS degree requires 30 credits. Accelerated Master's programs allow students to apply up to six of the credits earned while an undergraduate to both their bachelor's and master's degree.

To help undergraduate students to complete their degrees on time, many BS degrees at Michigan Tech have reduced their required credit hours to the minimum 120, or something close to that number, or plan to move in the direction of reducing required credit hours. Students from BS degrees with fewer than 126 required credits will not benefit much from the accelerated master's programs, under the current 150 total credit requirement, since they cannot take full advantage of the policy allowing six credits to be shared between graduate and undergraduate programs. By removing the 150 minimum total credit requirement, Michigan Tech will boost graduate enrollment and ensure on-time graduation.

While the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) has expectations that a bachelor's degree be a minimum of 120 credits and a master's degree be a minimum of 30 credits beyond a bachelor's, the HLC allows double counting (up to 50% of the credits required for the master's) for well-prepared students such that the total for earning both degrees can be fewer than 150 credits (HLC Assumed Practice B.1.c), which is more lenient than our current policy.

# Senate Policy 413.1

## Goals of the Proposed Policy:

- Develop a flexible policy framework that will allow individual departments/programs to offer integrated bachelor's/master's degree programs that meet the needs of their students, faculty, and academic discipline.
- Allow students in coursework degree programs (those that require neither a thesis nor a report) to apply a limited number of credits towards both the bachelor's and master's degrees.
- Allow outstanding undergraduate students to pursue an accelerated research-based master's degree and apply up to three undergraduate-level research credits earned as a senior-level student toward the research requirement for a master's degree (thesis or report option).
- Attract outstanding Michigan Tech bachelor's students into our master's programs.
- Attract outstanding bachelor's students from accredited institutions outside of Michigan Tech into our accelerated master's programs through negotiated agreements.

## Policy Guidelines:

### For Programs:

- The recommended curriculum for an accelerated master's program must be established in advance by each department or program that wishes to offer an accelerated master's program to their students.
- Recommended curricula for accelerated master's programs can allow students to apply up to a maximum of six of the credits earned while an undergraduate to both their bachelor's and master's degree.
- A maximum of three of the double-counted credits may be research credits. Programs may choose to not allow or limit the double-counting of either coursework or research credits or both.
- Any research credits earned by an undergraduate and applied toward a master's degree must be earned after the student has attained senior-level standing.
- Undergraduate students may not enroll in graduate research courses. Undergraduates who participate in research should enroll in undergraduate research courses.
- Up to a maximum of three credits of undergraduate research earned during the senior year may be substituted for graduate-level research credits if allowed by the graduate program.
- Only students in a research-based (thesis or report option) master's program may apply any undergraduate research credits toward a graduate degree.

- ~~Accelerated master's programs must require students to complete a minimum of 150 total credits for the bachelor's and master's combined.~~
- The maximum time to degree for students in an accelerated master's program is 5 years from the time the student is accepted into the program.
- Proposed accelerated master's programs that will result in students earning bachelor's and master's degrees that are both currently offered by Michigan Tech do not have to be reviewed or approved by the University Senate as they do not involve development of new degree programs.
- This policy cannot be used to develop stand-alone accelerated master's programs.
- Each plan for an accelerated master's programs must be reviewed by the Graduate School prior to the time it is made available to students. The Graduate School will ensure that the plan conforms to this policy and will make information about programs available to the Graduate Faculty Council and the University Senate and will advertise the programs on the Graduate School website.

**Additional Guidelines for Programs Participating in Negotiated Agreements:**

- The agreement must be supported by the academic program housing the Michigan Tech Accelerated Master's program.
- The faculty of the academic program at Michigan Tech will review the participating college/university's program curriculum and coursework and identify the coursework credits which will be double-counted.
- The academic program will determine admission requirements for students participating in the negotiated agreement.
- The academic program will review the students' final transcripts to ensure they meet the prescribed GPA requirements for accelerated programs.

**For Students:**

- Only students who intend to complete both their bachelor's and master's degrees at Michigan Tech can enroll in an accelerated master's program, with the exception of students participating in a negotiated agreement.
- Students already enrolled in a graduate program may not retroactively use this policy.
- In order to be formally accepted into an accelerated master's program students must apply to and be accepted into the Graduate School at Michigan Tech. Applications will be reviewed by departments and programs according to their normal procedure.
- Students can apply for admission to an accelerated master's program at any time after they attain sophomore-level class standing and up until they are awarded their bachelor's degree.

- Only students with a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or above are eligible to enter an accelerated master's program. Programs may set higher admission requirements. For example, programs may require a cumulative GPA of 3.5 for admission to a research-based (thesis or report option) master's program.
- Students who are accepted to the program will not be allowed to continue if their cumulative undergraduate GPA falls below 3.0. A higher GPA may be required by the program.
- Students must enroll within one semester of receiving their bachelor's degree.

**Additional Guidelines for Students Participating in Negotiated Agreements:**

- Students who are seeking admission to accelerated master's programs through a negotiated agreement will need to apply through the Graduate School's application process and be accepted by the academic programs.
- Students must apply and be accepted before receiving their bachelor's degree at their home institution.

**For University Administration:**

- Students will be considered undergraduates for the purposes of financial aid, tuition, and class standing until their undergraduate degree has been awarded.
- Once students are awarded their undergraduate degree, they will be considered graduate students for the purposes of financial aid, and tuition.
- Prior to completion of the master's degree, students must indicate on their master's degree schedule which undergraduate-level courses (if any are allowed by the program) and credits (up to a maximum of six, if allowed by the program for an accelerated master's degree) should be applied to both their bachelor's and master's degrees.
- The Dean of the Graduate school will report to the Senate on the number of accelerated master's programs, enrollment in these programs, the number of enrolled master's students who received their undergraduate degree from Michigan Tech and the number of these that are in accelerated master's programs. In addition, this report will include a comparison with the data from previous years.

**Additional Guidelines for University Administration Participating in Negotiated Agreements:**

- The Dean of the Graduate School will review and approve each new Accelerated Master's negotiated agreement, before forwarding for appropriate signatures.

- The Dean of the Graduate School will periodically report to the Senate on the number of accelerated master's students through negotiated agreements and the institutions that participate in the agreements.
- The Graduate School will review and approve departmentally approved degree schedules that identify specific courses to be double-count ed.

Proposal 13-11:

Introduced to Senate: 2 February 2011

Adopted by Senate: 16 February 2011

Approved by Administration: 25 February 2011

Proposal 1-12:

Introduced to Senate: 21 September 2011

Adopted by Senate: 5 October 2011

Approved by Administration with grammatical suggestions: 21 October 2011

Proposal 20-17:

Introduced to Senate: 15 March 2017

Adopted by Senate: 22 March 2017

Approved by Administration: 19 April 2017