



TO: Senate Agenda Committee
 FROM: EAPC
 DATE: February 21, 2024
 SUBJECT: Final report for EAPC

The EAPC had 14 meetings during the academic year (10/2023 – 02/21/2024 and has plans for 3 meetings before SAC presentation). The committee carried out the charges assigned by SAC after approval for combining Charges 1 and 2. The charges were addressed as follows with recommendations and/or resolutions:

1. The original charges from SAC to EAPC were as follows:

Committee charges
1. Charge 1 Combined Majors: University-wide (Boston Campus), identify the challenges students have with advising and approving combined majors, and propose structures and practices that are consistent across colleges; include plan for how to clearly communicate procedures for students pursuing combined majors.
2. Charge 2 Student Experience and Advising: Develop a plan for how advising, co-op, and Deans create clear and consistent messaging for students who choose combined majors across colleges. Key elements include the importance of the home college, key decision makers (advising/department chairs), major-specific co-op advisors/preparation, etc.
3. University wide (including Mills), conduct research on, and develop a proposal for developing a tuition exchange program as an additional benefit for faculty and staff. DEPENDENTS ONLY

On October 16, 2023, the members of EAPC recommended combining the two charges and it was approved.

Charge 1 and 2 – Combined Majors, Student Experiences and Advising:
1. University-wide (broadened BEYOND Boston Campus to include Oakland, London as Global Scholar): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identify the challenges students have with advising on combined majors. This charge was thoroughly investigated for Boston campus students in previous years' EAPC charges and reports. Summarized resolutions / recommendations are provided below. b. Propose structures and practices that are consistent across colleges: c. Include plan for how to INCREASE ACCESSIBILITY and clearly communicate ACTIONABLE procedures for students pursuing combined majors. [Key elements include the importance of the home college, key decision makers (advising/department chairs), major-specific co-op advisors/preparation, etc.]

Based on substantial evidence from faculty, academic and co-op advisors, and student interviews conducted in the past three years regarding combined major students' experiences, EAPC found inconsistent access to academic advising (especially for those whose combined majors are across colleges) remained an unresolved issue in 2022-23 and reiterated this prior 2021-22 resolution:

EAPC 2021-22 Resolution:

- WHEREAS combined majors across colleges represent a large and increasing percentage of the undergraduate student population and students pursuing combined majors should not face unnecessary impediments due to college boundaries.
- BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate recommend that the Office of the Provost works with Administrative Advisory Group and Associate Deans across colleges to implement a policy where a student is assigned two academic advisors, one for each side of a combined-major (perhaps a primary and secondary advisor to maintain developmental relationships), so

that students have direct access to timely information and advisors for both areas of their degree and consider the required effort when allocating resources.

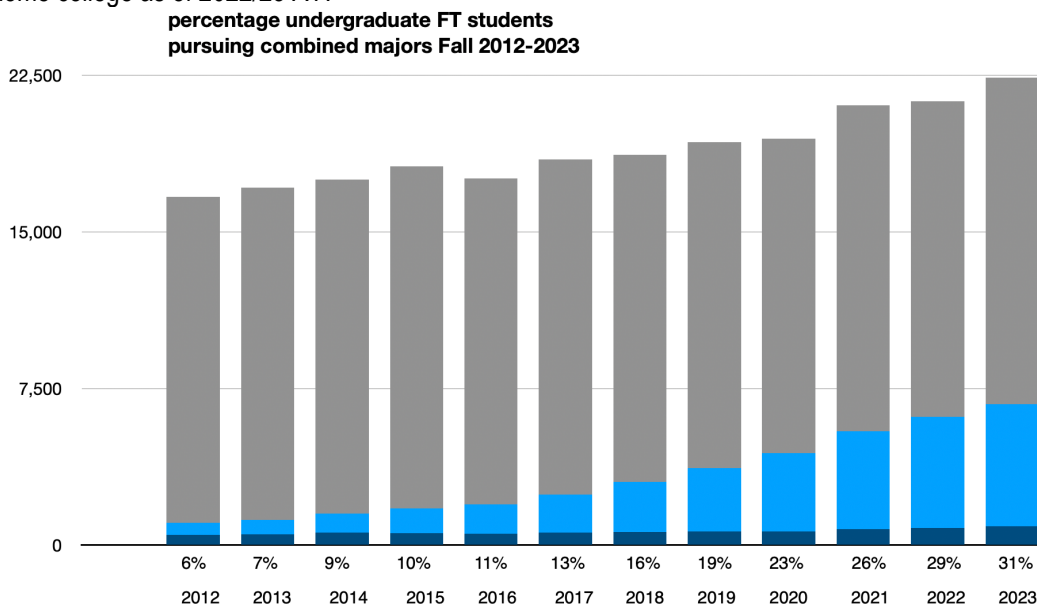
In addition, in 2022-23 EAPC reiterated the recommendation that the Office of the Provost work with Academic and Co-op Advisory Groups and Associate Deans across Colleges to create structures and practices that are consistent and student-centered in support of combined majors (especially for those whose combined majors are across colleges).

2021-22 EAPC Recommendations to Improve Student Experience:

- Offer students additional clarity on the implications of home college choice and decision points.
- Consider offering informational and welcome events that are major-focused, rather than college-focused.
- Offer student access to co-op advisors and major-specific co-op preparation and workshops regardless of home college and initial co-op preparation area.
- Create opportunities for equitable community and knowledge sharing for all students pursuing combined majors (especially for larger combined majors where numbers are split across two colleges).
- Review limitations to access presented by college-focused awards and scholarships.

Enrollment in combined majors has increased over the years with the most growth in combined majors shared between two colleges.

Currently, students choose a combined major home college during the application process via the Common or Coalition App or during orientation or advisory meetings. There is no indication of the future implications of home college choice at the initial application time. Combined major students are assigned a home college Academic Advisor and Coop Advisor and take required co-op preparatory classes in their home college. Degrees combined with Engineering require College of Engineering as their home college, due to accreditation requirements. Khoury College began allowing combined majors to choose their home college as of 2022/23 AY.



Fall	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
total undergraduate FT enrollment	16,684	17,106	17,511	18,128	18,107	18,464	18,687	18,921	19,462	20,838	21,257	22,015
combined majors shared across colleges	587	702	917	1,185	1,407	1,836	2,390	3,018	3,755	4,665	5,314	5,856
combined majors both within same college	474	504	601	580	534	587	622	660	658	775	824	888
total undergraduate combined majors	1,061	1,206	1,518	1,765	1,941	2,423	3,012	3,678	4,413	5,440	6,138	6,744

Figure 1: Northeastern University Decision Support Fact Book Combined Majors Enrollment

2023-24 EAPC actions

EAPC members exchanged emails inquiring on current procedures in advising combined majors in CSSH, which had policies that differed from other colleges based on previous years information gathering efforts.

EAPC members also met with Faculty Development Committee (FDC) to clarify overlaps and share strategies on combined major charges from 2022/23 and 2023/24, especially the FDC 2022/23 recommendation that overlaps with current EAPC charge:

FDC 2022/23 Charge: Strengthen the advising available to combined majors:

- Standardize access to advisors in both units of combined majors across the University.
- Student Advisors and Co-op Advisors should receive additional professional development to support combined major students better, including advising them on co-op and post-graduation employment trajectories.

The EAPC 2022/23 final report also included a recommendation that these same issues be addressed University wide. FDC members indicated that they planned to meet with Dean's Office representatives across the University in Spring 2024 to follow-up on combined major pedagogy integration strategies. Both Faculty Senate committees agreed to keep communication channels open on issues of advising combined majors to avoid duplicate efforts and offer appropriate context for each committee's recommendations.

EAPC members met with Mike Jackson, Vice Provost of Curriculum and Programs, Office of the Provost

Mike Jackson shared in an email that he meets with the Advising Leadership team and attends meetings with the Registrar's Office and Advising Leadership bi-weekly. The topic of combined major advising is a regular agenda item and one that he has also discussed with the undergraduate Associate Deans. He indicated that it is a vital student support issue and one that he agrees we need to solve in a manner that puts student needs first. During the meeting EAPC members learned that colleges are (*as of Dec 2023*) working to implement shared policies and procedures as follows:

- Assign dedicated combined major Academic Advisors in each college (some colleges already have this model, but others such as CSSH do not currently allow direct student access to CSSH advisors for those with other home colleges).
- Academic Advisor names for both degree areas colleges will be listed in Navigate for direct student access to advisor appointments.
- Share documents across college advising units with informational notes supporting each combined major, especially those that are across colleges.

We also discussed ongoing challenges and suggestions for improved practices:

- Combined majors with fewer than 30 students pose special challenges for advising and are more likely to "fall through the cracks."
- Ensure consistent access to orientation sessions for combined major students across colleges via online and/or in person access.
- Have a "regular cadence" of information sessions for combined majors.
- Ensure accuracy and ongoing update of information in shared advising documents (also verified and shared with faculty in role of program coordinators) so there is consistent communication with combined major students especially across colleges.
- EAPC members communicated prior years' research indicated ongoing access issues for combined majors to major or college-specific co-op training (a small but important percentage of co-op class content). Conversations with Khoury in the past suggested the possibility of modular online training (regarding technical interviews for combined majors with Computer Science for those who do not have Khoury as their home college). A similar model could be used for access to portfolio development for those with CAMD combined degrees in another home college. VP Jackson indicated that Khoury is piloting some online intercession courses, so maybe that delivery model could work. The Office of the Chancellor would need to be involved as co-op is their charge.

EAPC members met with Alison Ottaviano -- Advising of Global Scholars, Office of the Provost

Alison reports to Mike Jackson and was previously the Director of Advising for CAMD.

EAPC Questions: (1) How are Global Scholars students advised? (2) Are there special challenges in advising Global Scholars students about combined majors?

- London has college-specific advisors, while Mills has general first-year advisors.
- The first-year curriculum is pretty foundational – most combined major issues won't arise until later.
- The challenges (“pain points”) are more closely related to a student's college than to their class year – often because of variations between the different colleges' practices and policies.
- Advising becomes more specialized as students advance in their coursework, making it more challenging for the other college advisor to give appropriate advising. That's not specific to Global Scholars.
- However, what is more particular to Global Scholars is that their advising is often on a general level. That gives some students the impression their advisors aren't helpful for their specific interests.
- Advising staff can work to “level set” Global Scholars' expectations and clearly communicate to them that there's a handoff to the college-specific advisors.

EAPC recommends that the **2021-21 EAPC Resolution** addressing inconsistent access to academic advising across colleges (and student survey results from 2022-23) be implemented and acted upon (*which based on the December 2023 conversations with Provosts Office, this is well underway*).

2021-22 EAPC Resolution:

- WHEREAS combined majors across colleges represent a large and increasing percentage of the undergraduate student population and students pursuing combined majors should not face unnecessary impediments due to college boundaries.
- BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate recommend that the Office of the Provost works with Administrative Advisory Group and Associate Deans across colleges to implement a policy where a student is assigned two academic advisors, one for each side of a combined-major (perhaps a primary and secondary advisor to maintain developmental relationships), so that students have direct access to timely information and advisors for both areas of their degree and consider the required effort when allocating resources.

In addition, the EAPC recommends that the **2022-23 EAPC Recommendations to Improve the Student Experience (see above)** be moved to an actionable resolution

2023-24 EAPC Resolution:

- WHEREAS combined majors across colleges represent a large and increasing percentage of the undergraduate student population and students pursuing combined majors should not face unnecessary impediments due to college and department boundaries.
- BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate recommend that the Office of the Chancellor and the Office of the Provost work with Administrative Advisory Group and Associate Deans across colleges to implement these steps for clear communication and equitable combined major student access:
 - Clarify and communicate implications of ‘home college’ choice and provide advising junctures to change as desired in consultation with Academic Advisors.
 - Provide student access (in person or virtually) on a regular basis to informational, welcome, and community events in both degree areas, especially across colleges.
 - Provide students access to Co-op Advisors and major-specific co-op preparation and workshops (e.g. portfolio preparation, technical interview preparation, etc.) pertinent to both degree areas, regardless of the students' home college and initial co-op preparation area (consider virtual modules or co-op class access across colleges).
 - Provide students information about, and access to, department and college-organized awards and scholarships for both degree areas of their combined major.
 - Ensure that Global Scholars students who are considering a combined major are clearly advised about choosing a home college and about the implications of that choice for their degree path.

Charge 3 Tuition Exchange:

Committee charges

3. University wide (including Mills), conduct research on, and develop a proposal for developing a tuition exchange program as an additional benefit for faculty and staff. **DEPENDENTS ONLY**

Currently, Northeastern offers full-time faculty/staff, after 3 years of service 100% tuition for undergraduate and graduate courses in UG Day Boston, Mills at Northeastern, London and CPS. Part-time faculty must have at least ten years of service and the benefit must be used in a term in which the faculty member teaches - if full-time student, then one-fourth of the standard tuition charge is waived in the eligible term and if part-time student, a maximum of four credit hours is waived in the eligible term.

In 2022-23 EAPC performed a tuition exchange program review which included a survey of faculty on the importance of tuition exchange. Given these questions were included in the 2022/23 survey, we did not repeat the survey questions as it is unlikely that attitudes toward tuition exchange benefits have changed significantly in one year. The results of the 2022 are summarized here and can be found in more detail in the 2022-23 EAPC report.

In fall 2022, 74% of survey respondents completed the tuition remission questions. Fifty percent (50%) of faculty surveyed stated that the dependent tuition benefit was very important or important to them when accepting their faculty position and 42% of faculty surveyed stated they were planning to use this benefit. In open ended questions faculty expressed that that tuition benefit was one of the main reasons they chose to work or maintained their employment at Northeastern and there are concerns about dependents being admitted to the University due to decreases in the acceptance rate. Respondents encouraged exploration of other tuition benefit options and providing tuition support for students admitted to pathway programs.

In the 2022/23 report, the EAPC also reported on the rates of acceptance for faculty/staff dependent applicants. More detailed analysis can be found in the 2022/23 report, but for AY23 there were 125 applicants with a fall admit rate of 22%, a spring admit rate of 25%, NUBound admit rate of 1% and contract admits rate of 45%. It should be noted that data analyzed over 5 years illustrated that while the number of faculty/staff dependent applications remained steady, there was a decline in the fall admit rate and an increase in contract admits.

This year the EAPC expanded our research into tuition remission benefits for dependents at competitor and aspirational schools. We analyzed tuition remission benefits of 33 private institutions, 31 domestic and 2 international. We found that 23 institutions (70%) had some form of tuition remission for dependents at other accredited institutions. Remission ranged from 30 – 50%, the maximum noted was 75% tuition coverage at outside institutions. In all cases, this was less than or equal to the remission at the home institution. Of those schools, 4 used a third-party tuition exchange manager or other scholarship program. Eleven (11) institutions (33%) included specific language in their tuition remission policies for coverage of international study. The EAPC also met with representatives of Mills College to discuss tuition remission benefits before consolidation of Mills College with Northeastern. Prior to the merger, Mill College offered 100% tuition for undergraduate study at Mills College and additionally offered a tuition exchange scholarship program to cover a percentage of the tuition at other accredited institutions.

The EAPC recommends the following resolution:

WHERE AS Mills College and most competitor institutions offered tuition exchange and the increase in contract admissions which suggests that benefited faculty/staff will not have full access to the tuition benefit

BE IT RESOLVED that the University adopt a tuition remission policy to be 100% tuition for undergraduate (UG) and graduate (G) courses in UG Day Boston, Mills at Northeastern, London and CPS including NUIn and Global Scholars, and develop an option to apply for tuition exchange or other scholarship to cover a percentage of the tuition at other accredited institutions (as was done at Mills College). Additionally, create a pathway for scholarships to increase tuition coverage for Dialogues of Civilization and traditional study abroad programs.

Other activities:

As a follow-up to our 2021-22 EAPC report and resolution "...recommend that Northeastern University Decision Support review and revise the Undergraduate Student Exit Survey to be more inclusive of undergraduate combined majors and allow better access to future data regarding the student experience of combined majors (whether within a single college or across colleges)."

Our committee reached out to Diane Danelian (December 2023) to see if the suggested edits below were implemented. She shared that "the Class of 2024 Exit survey of undergraduate students is currently in the data collection phase; therefore, the edits were not possible at this point." And she welcomed the EAPC's feedback on how to enhance the instrument to be more inclusive of combined major.

January 29, 2024 – we shared the following suggested edits (see below) and Diane Danelian reported back that they incorporated the edits into the Class of 2025 exit survey instrument. She also shared the survey will be administered December 2024-January 2025.

Undergraduate Student Exit Survey (excerpt of the questions with suggested edits)

Existing question: On the whole, how satisfied were you with your major?

Accepted proposed revision: On the whole, how satisfied were you with your major or combined major?

Existing question: If you have more than one, report the major from your primary college

Accepted proposed revision: If you have more than one, report the major from your primary college

Remove this phrase or qualify that it only applies to double majors, not combined majors.

Existing question How satisfied were you with the following aspects of your major?

Accepted proposed question: How satisfied were you with the following aspects of your major or combined major?

Lastly, we shared with Diane Danelian that perhaps additional survey modifications should be considered by her office to capture the name of the degree involved in the combined majors, and subsequent questions asked for each area of the degree (orientation and integration into the colleges, academic advising, coop advising, etc.). While this would provide more in-depth data, it could provide more useful data. And we did tell her that while it was not part of the EAPC charges, the SAC FDC may be asking for data given their 2023-24 charge:

- Regularly evaluate/assess individual combined majors in terms of impact and effectiveness. This data can be used to assess/promote the effectiveness, viability, and ROI of combined majors, both internally and externally (e.g., with prospective students, co-op employers, etc.). This might include:
 - Quantitative and qualitative input from current combined major students.
 - Feedback from co-op employers and alumni on combined majors' preparedness and competitiveness for the job market.
 - Revise combined major curricula as needed to reflect these assessments.

Respectfully submitted,

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