

10/2/14
Undergraduate Council
(Report from VPUGS Freinkel)

Credit-Bearing vs. Non-Credit Bearing Courses

BACKGROUND:

AY 2012-13:

- UOCC asked for policy guidance regarding courses that seemed to fall out of the traditional academic model. E.g. FHS 199 "Leadership for the 21st Century" or career-oriented courses taught with "CAS" subject-code.

AY 2013-14:

- UGC took up the subject of so-called "para-academic courses." The question of definition came up repeatedly. They felt adjunctive to an academic discipline, but perhaps critical to a student's academic success.
- Three buckets:
 - *Non-academic*: Non-credit bearing
 - *Para-academic??*: Credit-bearing but limited toward bachelors (e.g. PE and TLC)
 - *Academic*: Credit degree bearing, unlimited
- Specific Example: FHS 399 – 3 requirements emerging out of UGC discussion:
 - a. Students enrolling in a course required as part of an employment position will not pay for the cost of the course (e.g. tuition and fees).
 - b. Employment supervisors will not perform an instructional or evaluative role in the course for their supervisees (e.g. the course will not function as an extended job interview or performance evaluation).
 - c. Para-academic courses will not function as a form of employment training, but instead provide intellectual engagement with academic content.

AY 2014-15 Recommendations:

- Shift conversation away from "non-academic," "academic" "para-academic." Focus instead on question of credit- vs. non-credit bearing.
 - *When we refer to a course as academic, what we are really saying is that it is credit-bearing: it contributes to the pursuit of an academic degree. Either a course serves a recognizable academic objective -- meaning that its learning outcomes contribute meaningfully toward an academic degree -- or it doesn't.*
 - *Eliminate confusion of "credit-bearing" with "educational." Example of "Diabetes Management"....*
- UGC should revisit and clarify the rationale for limits toward bachelors. Define precise guidelines for whether, when and to what extent these limits should apply.
- Use curricular mapping to clarify whether a course should be credit-bearing or not. Credit-bearing courses can be mapped -- clearly, without hyperbole or distortion -- on to specific departmental learning outcomes.

- When in question: UOCC can ask for this rationale to be articulated and for the course to be submitted to the VPUGS for review (see next bullet.) Departments, schools, colleges should anticipate this request.
- Procedure for (Proposed) credit-bearing courses originating from non-academic departments (or for review of cases referred from UOCC):
 - Course would require VPUGS approval (analogous to academic dean) before going to the UOCC.
 - VPUGS would ascertain, first and foremost, whether the course maps on to existing degree-related learning outcomes.
 - VPUGS would also assess all other aspects of course (e.g. appropriate learning outcomes, student engagement inventory, etc).
 - If relevant VPUGS would additionally determine/assess compliance with three principles (a,b,c) articulated above.
 - If needed, course would be assigned the “UGS” subject code.