

Curricular Affairs Committee

on credit hour equivalencies “we clearly need to update the Senate policy on credit hours to better reflect the variety of ways courses are taught these days. Personally, I think we need to get away from counting minutes of specific activities and move toward a more flexible definition.”

2. eLearning has made a recommendation for online courses (see attached document which, even if we make no other changes, should be considered for inclusion in the Course Degree Procedures Manual
3. The question before us is: do we need to make changes? It does not appear that UAF’s current policy violates UA regulations, but...

PREVIOUS BOR POLICY: “Student effort is indicated by credit hours. One credit hour represents one hour of student work per week for a 15-week semester (e.g., one hour of lecture and two hours of study or three hours of laboratory) for a minimum of 2250 minutes of total student engagement, which may include exam periods. Equivalencies to this standard may be approved by the chief academic officer of the university or community college.”

CURRENT BOR POLICY: (R10.04.090F.2) “A credit hour is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates not less than: 1) one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or 2) at least an equivalent amount of work for other academic activities as established by the institution, including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours. Equivalencies to this standard may be approved by the chief academic officer of the university or community college.”

CURRENT UAF FACULTY SENATE POLICY:

<http://www.uaf.edu/uafaculty/senate/curriculum/courseprocedures/guidelinesforcomputing->

UAF Faculty Senate policy states that “One academic credit hour of instruction at UAF will consist of a minimum of 800 minutes of instruction” (FS meeting #3, March 25, 1988). It is understood that an average student expected to spend 1600 minutes of study and preparation outside of class in order to meet the learning objectives unit of credit in lecture.

Related to credit hours is the length of the semester. This was established as Senate policy, “The UAF Faculty Senate to establish a 16-week instructional period for the Fairbanks campus with provision for an additional period during each semester.” (FS meeting #21, October 15, 1990)

The 2002/2008 catalog (p. 226) indicates that:

“One credit represents satisfactory completion of 800 minutes of lecture or 1600 or 2400 minutes of laboratory (or other similar activity), whichever is appropriate. (It is understood that an average student will be expected to spend minutes of study and preparation outside of class in order to meet the learning objectives for the unit of credit in lecture.)”

Credit hours may not be divided, except for credit hours may be granted at the appropriate rate. For short courses and classes of less than one semester in duration, course hours may not be compressed into fewer than three days per week. Any course compressed into fewer than six weeks must be approved by the college or school's curriculum council. Furthermore, any core course compressed to less than six weeks must be approved by the Core Review Committee.

The following standards establish the requirements for an academic unit of credit (FS meeting #141, February 5, 2007):

1. 800 minutes of lecture (plus 1600 minutes of study)

2. 1600 or 2400 minutes of laboratory (or studio or other similar activity)
3. 2400/4000 minutes of supervised practicum
4. 2400/8000 minutes of internship (or externship, clinical)
5. 2400/4800 minutes of supervised scholarly activity

Given the above information the formula used for computing credit/contact hours is 800 minutes (13.3 hrs) per credit. This equates to approximately 1 hour of lecture per week for a normal 14 week semester. The number of minutes required for one credit of laboratory (1600 or 2400) depends on the amount of instruction given. For typical science and engineering labs where students work with teaching assistant guidance performing preset exercises, 2400 minutes (2 hours/week/credit for a 14 week semester) is used. For labs in which a faculty member interacts with students and provides feedback throughout the laboratory period (clinical labs, art studio, automotive technical labs) 1600 minutes (2 hours/week/credit for a 14 week semester) is used. A course submission with a lab component should include a justification for the number of minutes of lab per credit employed.

IV. Old business

RATIONALE: The GERC committee and Curricular Affairs, as part of their work to revise UAF's core requirements in response to the Faculty Senate adoption of the LEAP outcomes, propose replacing the current W/O designators with a requirement that students achieve the Communications Learning Outcomes that is integrated into each baccalaureate degree program and major.

1. The responsibility for ensuring that students achieve these Communications Learning Outcomes is being moved from the University level (via specific O and W courses) to the departments (via the requirements of the degree programs), and from a specific degree requirement (taking two Ws and one O) to a requirement that is transparent to the student and is achieved simply by the student completing the degree requirements associated with their program.
2. To ensure student achievement of these Communications Learning Outcomes, each department will demonstrate how they address these learning outcomes by developing a Communications Plan that integrates communication at the lower and upperlevel into each degree or program, typically via a collection of courses and/or non-curricular degree requirements chosen to meet the needs of the particular program, in such a way that all the outcomes are met somewhere in the collection of courses. The Communications Plan for each degree will describe the collection of courses (possibly, both in and out of the department) and other requirements (if any) and how they contribute to meeting these outcomes.
3. Departments will submit the Communications Plan for each degree program as part of their SLOA plans, and subsequently, by submitting a short summary report addressing how the plan is working (and revising the plan as necessary). Once a department has submitted a plan, which will include a required path/collection of paths through the degree wherein students will achieve the Communications Learning Outcomes, then all students in that degree will achieve the Communications Learning Outcomes by virtue of satisfying the degree requirements of that program.
4. To facilitate implementation, GERC recommends an ad hoc committee be formed to review the initial Communications Plans. They suggest the addition of an additional checkbox on Major/Minor course change forms asking "does this change affect Communications Outcomes Plans?", so that departments are aware of potential changes.
5. EXISTING O/W COURSES AND DESIGNATORS SHOULD REMAIN IN PLACE FOR PERIOD OF 7 YEARS FROM FALL 2016 TO FACILITATE STUDENTS UNDER CATALOG WITH O/W REQUIREMENTS.
6. Faculty Senate should determine how best to assess how well departments and majors are achieving the Communications outcomes as implemented in the Communications plan associated with each program and degree. GERC recommend a long-term committee that can serve as a resource for communications related courses, as well as to assess the long term efficacy of Communications plans.
7. Finally, GERC recommends a web page (similar to the SLOA) where communications plans are collected and disseminated across the university.

CAPS = additions

[[]] = deletions

This motion will ~~delete~~ CHANGE the following statements ~~from~~ the ~~2014-15~~ 2016-17 UAF Catalog:

Page 132, Course Recommendations for the Baccalaureate Core, fourth sentence:

Courses meeting the upper division writing intensive and oral communication intensive requirements for the baccalaureate core FOR STUDENTS UNDER CATALOGS PRIOR TO FALL 2016 identified in the course description of the catalog with the following designators:

~~O~~—oral communication intensive course

~~W~~—writing intensive course

Two courses designated O/2 are required to complete the oral intensive

The Faculty Senate moves to replace the current Perspectives on Human Condition (PHC)

Questions:

- x Should we specify that during the implementation process, the current table of substitutions for transfer courses could be used to allow students under previous catalogs to fulfill PHC course requirements?
- x Do we wait until later to deal with the proposal for "decorating" courses with the A (Alaska/Arctic), D (Diversity), E (Civic Engagement)?
- x Do we specify a committee to review proposals for listing courses on the arts, humanities, and social science lists? Should it be Core Review? An ad hoc committee? We should ensure that its composition be at minimum one rep from each college or school

C. Statewide Gen Ed committee update- Rainer/Newberry

D. Probation/disqualification policy – still on hold.

PROPOSED eLEARNING DEFINITION FOR ONLINE COURSES

The current federal definition of credit hour was established in October 2010. A Dear Colleague letter published in 2011 gave additional guidance on this topic: <http://ifap.ed.gov/dpccletters/GEN1106.html>. In part, it says:

A credit hour for Federal purposes is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates some minimum amount of student work reflective of the amount of work expected in a Carnegie unit: key phrases being "institutionally established," "equivalency," "reasonably approximates," and "minimum amount."

University of Alaska (UA) Regulation 10.04/02 F.2 states:

A credit hour is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates not less than:

- 1) one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks of one semester or trimester hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or
- 2) at least an equivalent amount of work for other academic activities as established by the institution, including laboratory work, internships, practice, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours. Equivalencies to this standard may be approved by the chief academic officer of the university or community college.

This aligns with the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) accreditation policy. In fact, UA regulations reflect NWCCU's policy nearly verbatim.

UA regulation, NWCCU policy, and the federal definition all emphasize ***amount of student work*** as the key metric for determining credit hours.

Instruction in a fully online course may look different than in a classroom-based course. Online courses frequently employ more active learning strategies and less didactic methods. Despite methodology differences, each UA course must meet the learning outcomes established for that course designator—regardless of delivery mode. It is expected that the total time spent on learning activities in an online course will roughly equate to the total time spent on attendance and out-of-class work for a classroom-based course.

To address this expectation, UAF eLearning has suggested four common categories for student effort in an online course:

- 1) INSTRUCTION (things like lectures, readings, teacher-student conferences)
- 2) INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH (individual research for papers or projects)
- 3) ASSIGNMENTS (completion of projects and assessments)
- 4) COLLABORATION (discussion, groups projects, blog commenting)

During the process of course development, instructional designers ask the faculty member to identify percentages of expected student effort within these four categories. Further, the faculty developer is asked to ensure that the total approximates the total expected effort for an equivalent classroom-based course (i.e., 2,400 minutes per credit hour).