

3/7/2019 GAC Minutes

Minutes of the Graduate Academic Council meeting of March 7, 2019, 9:00 AM UAB 121.

Approved by the Council on April 18, 2019 by vote of 9-0-0.

In attendance: S. Appe, G. Berg, A. Dawson, S. Faught, C. Lawson, A. Morse, S. Rafferty (chair),
T. Williams-Hart, W. Zakrzewski Jr., K. Williams, J. Bartow (staff), S. Kent (staff),
S. Pease (staff), C. Davis (staff), J. Deden (staff)

Guests: Debra Gelinias – Assistant Vice Provost for Applied Learning, Director,
Center for Experiential Education
Christine Bozlak – Associate Professor, Department of Health Policy,
Management & Behavior
Rachel de Long – Clinical Associate Professor, Health Policy, Management & Behavior
D. Mahar - Registrar's Office

1. The draft GAC minutes from 2/1/19 were considered, amended and approved by vote of 8-0-1.
2. Dean's Report – Kevin Williams – No report, but Dean Williams related to the Council the success of the inaugural '3 Minute Thesis' competition recently sponsored by Graduate Education.
3. Chair's Report – Chair Rafferty reported that a new Academic Program Review Process Committee has been tasked with creating a streamlined process requiring less work and shortening the process' length of time. Current new program process from program conception to approval can take approximately 2 years. Current focus is on aligning graduate with undergraduate processes. Goal is to present a unified proposal to SEC in April.
4. Report of the GAC's Committee on Curriculum & Instruction – Prof. Berg reviewed the Committee's recommendation that the Latin American, Caribbean, and US Latino Studies' Ph.D. Concentration in the Spanish PhD program proposed changes be approved by the Council. The Council approved the proposal by vote of 9-0-0 (details below).
5. Proposal to establish a BS/MS combined program pathway in Electrical & Computer - Engineering - Jon Bartow presents for Gary Saulnier – Jon Bartow reviewed the proposal and fielded questions from the Council. A discrepancy in the proposal was discovered, as to whether the required credits for is 142 or 138.
The Council approved the proposal pending clarification of number of the number of credits by a vote of 9-0-0.
6. Policy Update Proposal – Undergrads enrolling in graduate courses - Jon Bartow
Endorsement was sought for a proposal to amend policy in a manner that will normally limit undergraduates seeking to enroll in graduate coursework to 12 credits without further

permission and self-acknowledgement of corresponding financial issues (billing and potential financial aid).

The Council voted to approved the policy proposal and for it to be sent to other councils and governance for consideration by a vote of 9-0-0.

7. Micro-credentialing Policy Proposal - presenter Debra Gelinias – The Proposal appended to these minutes was reviewed in detail by Dr. Gelinias and she responded to a handful of questions. The Council voted to approve the policy proposal by a vote of 7-1-1.

8. Maternal & Child Health (M&C H) Grad Certificate Proposal – presenter Christine Bozlak, assisted by Rachel de Long, both for School of Public Health – Center for Public Health

Continuing Education has had a M&C H initiative for 4 years and the need to have a formal certificate program became apparent. Review of proposal points included a 12 credit certificate program as an add-on for degree students or a stand-alone for others. It was noted that the program is likely to be a complementary program for current students and may not necessarily create new student enrollments. Future goals are to offer all courses in the evenings and possibly online.

The Council approved the proposal for the new certificate program by a vote of 9-0-0.

Meeting was adjourned without opposition, at 10:00 AM.

End of 3/7/2019 GAC Minutes

Curriculum and Instruction Committee

February 6, 2019

Proposal reviewed: Spanish Doctoral Program (Latin American, Caribbean, and US Latino Studies concentration)

Committee Members: George Berg (chair), Haijun Chen, Andrea Kordzek, Alex Morse, Stephen Weinberg, Billy Zakrzewski, Alec Dawson, Keith Chan, Sydney Faught

Staff: Colleen Davis

This proposal was reviewed electronically by all of the committee members.

Spanish Doctoral Program (LACS concentration) proposal

The Latin American, Caribbean, and US Latino Studies department is proposing the following changes to the Spanish Doctoral Program (Latin American, Caribbean, and US Latino Studies concentration) program:

- Delete the mention of “focus area.” The department has not used this language in a number of years and it confuses their graduate students. Students are able to take the same courses but they are not locked into choosing specific areas which are no longer justifiable given the interdisciplinary nature of their research.
- Replace the Graduate Methods Course requirement (as advised by Graduate Director) with a designated course (ALCS600). Students are encouraged to take an additional methods course appropriate or necessary to conduct their dissertation research. The aim of the ALCS 600 course is to assist students hone and define the research method particular to their topic and interests. They will examine recent work in a number of different disciplines and interdisciplinary approaches to Latin American, Caribbean and Latinx Studies. Students will comment on and analyze methods in order to draw from them for the purposes of structuring a project. The final project either will be a research proposal, or, if that already exists, a research paper.

Based on the department’s justification above, the committee voted to approve the proposed program changes (9 approve, 0 disapprove, 0 abstain).

Policy Proposal

Supplemental to existing campus registration policies providing advanced undergraduate students enrollment access to graduate courses (see addendum), the following is proposed:

Advanced and qualified undergraduate students may normally take up to a maximum of 12 credits of graduate course work while in undergraduate status. Undergraduates seeking to enroll in more than 12 credits of graduate course work will need to secure support on academic grounds from the student’s academic advisor and acknowledge in advance that such enrollment beyond 12 graduate credits will be subject to tuition/fee charges at the graduate level and may not necessarily be undergraduate financial aid eligible unless applicable to the undergrad program.

Rationale

The University wants to encourage undergraduates to challenge themselves academically and provide access to graduate course work to qualified undergraduates when warranted. This policy update will not change that supportive perspective.

Campus policy currently specifies that undergraduate students in combined bachelors/master's program pathways, commonly referred to as "BA/MA" students, are subject to graduate charges when registering for more than 12 graduate credits. There is no corresponding regulation/provision for undergraduates not formally in such "BA/MA" programs when registering for graduate level course work. This policy is proposed to create consistency of billing practices and to assure that such graduate enrollments are academically advisable in all cases. Creating a corresponding process to insure advisability, provide for up-front student financial liability/aid notifications and facilitate self-identification for such billing will be helpful to both the students and University billing offices. Too, undergraduate enrollments in graduate courses will be monitored so that faculty driven graduate admissions processes are not circumvented.

Supplemental

Upon endorsement and final approval, this policy may require implementation of an IAS registration system check point, subject to an override process when warranted, including notification to relevant advisors and offices.

Source: Jon Bartow, Office for Graduate Education, February 2019

Addendum

Policies and procedures currently in place:

Combined Baccalaureate-Master's Degree Programs

https://www.albany.edu/graduatebulletin/requirements_combined_baccalaureate_masters.htm

Students are considered undergraduates until they have accumulated 120 credits, satisfied all degree requirements and been awarded the baccalaureate degree. *However, although students who have failed to satisfy "all degree requirements" will not be granted the baccalaureate degree until all undergraduate requirements are met, please be aware that for determining such matters as whether students pay undergraduate or graduate tuition, the following policy applies:* Although admitted to an integrated degree program, a student will be considered as an undergraduate student for the purposes of tuition billing, financial aid, and enrollment identification until qualified to receive the bachelor's degree or until enrolled in the 13th credit of graduate coursework. Once a student is qualified to receive the bachelor's degree or enrolls in the 13th credit of graduate course work, the student will be considered a graduate student for tuition billing, financial aid and enrollment identification, and will be eligible for graduate assistantships, fellowships, and loans.

Registration Policies

<https://www.albany.edu/registrar/registration-policies.php>

Graduate Courses for Undergraduate Credit: A senior with a superior academic record may register for a 500-level course for undergraduate credit with the approval of the major department chair and the course instructor. A Permission Number is required to enroll in a 500-level course. In exceptional circumstances, seniors may be authorized to register for 600-level graduate courses provided they have completed most of the upper-division undergraduate and other courses essential to their major and require a graduate course to strengthen it. To qualify for such enrollment, the senior must have a superior record, particularly in his or her major field. To register for a 600-level course, students must have the approval of their advisor and obtain the written consent of their department chair and the instructor offering the course. The department chair should arrange for copies of these consents to be distributed to the persons involved and to be filed in the student's official folder. The student who has obtained permission should register, in person, at the Registrar's Office, Campus Center B52. In all cases, undergraduate students enrolled in graduate courses are subject to graduate grading policies (see Grading Policies below).

Graduate Courses for Graduate Credit: Seniors of high academic standing in the University may receive graduate credit for graduate courses taken in excess of undergraduate requirements in the last semester of their senior year provided not more than 6 credits are needed to complete the student's undergraduate program. Consent of the Dean of Graduate Education is required and must be obtained in advance of registration to receive such credit. Seniors who are permitted to take courses for graduate credit in their last semester also must make formal application for admission to a graduate program and be accepted as a graduate student before registering for study in the final semester.

Discussion/Clarification Points

- The proposed policy seeks to establish consistent billing treatment/limit for undergrads taking graduate courses, whether in combined “BA/MA” program pathways or not.
- The 12 credit threshold check point is intended to assure that graduate study beyond that point is academically advisable and that students are aware of costs and potential financial aid impacts in advance, rather than after the fact.
- A supporting check point approval process should provide a solid and improved student self-identification basis for billing and financial aid offices to administer campus, SUNY and federal policies.
- The 12 credit threshold check point is also intended to assure that students seeking to study towards the master’s degree seek formal admission from the faculty.

Micro-Credentials at the University at Albany Developed by Dr. Debra Gelinas, Assistant Vice Provost for Applied Learning Proposal Version 3.0, February 2019

The Lumina Foundation (2015) defines a credential as “a documented award by a responsible and authorized body that has determined that an individual has achieved specific learning outcomes relative to a given standard”. According to SUNY, micro-credentials verify, validate and attest that students have acquired specific skills and/or competencies. They are endorsed by the issuing institution, having been developed through established faculty governance processes and are designed to be portable, meaningful and high quality. Micro-credentials motivate students to persist toward degree completion, help learners prepare for careers and stand out to employers, stack toward larger credentials, and support lifelong learning through “upskilling” opportunities for professionals. They may be offered at the undergraduate and/or graduate level, to matriculated or non-matriculated students.

At UAlbany, micro-credentials are not certificate programs. Certificate programs must be registered with SUNY and the State Education Department. Micro-credentials at UAlbany will be developed and approved locally. Microcredentials will be issued as an icon called a digital badge, not on the academic transcript, but on an online credentialing platform called Credly Acclaim (with whom SUNY has an existing relationship). Micro-credentials should be industry-aligned and may be comprised of academic assignments in identified courses, workshop attendance, internships or other experiential learning, and/or a variety of co-curricular experiences. Badges have become the industry standard for documenting digital credentials. They enable learners to track, display and articulate verified evidence of skill development. While digital credentials will not be academic credit-bearing at UAlbany, they will contain metadata, including information regarding the issuing institution, the date earned, the criteria required to earn the badge, and the associated evidence related to the awarded badge. Credly Acclaim badges are transferable and portable – they can be posted to a variety of online platforms, including LinkedIn, digital portfolios, websites, and resumes.

Three different types of micro-credentials will be offered at UAlbany: 1) Professional Pathways. Mapped to skills and competencies desired in a particular professional field, these pathways generally include academic courses and experiential learning. Often they will be interdisciplinary. Examples may include areas like artificial intelligence, arts administration, or climate action. Specific academic assignments will be identified in each course that map to the skills and competencies identified for the particular professional field. 2) Skill Badges. Offered to current students and complementing the curriculum, these are smaller badges that help earners obtain and demonstrate skills. These can include, for example, industry-recognized “hard” skills like a programming language or graphic design, or “soft” skills such as metaliteracy (already at UAlbany University Libraries) or critical thinking. These badges can be stand-alone or built into a course, but they are not academic credit-bearing opportunities. 3) Continuing Education Badges. Used for lifelong learning, professional training in collaboration with employers, or a smaller version of a larger graduate or certificate program (often as a way recruit individuals to enroll in those programs). For example, a licensed social worker may take a continuing education course 2 and participate in three related workshops to earn a badge. Schools or colleges may also partner with a company to offer a training program that leads to a micro-credential.

Demand from Employers: Micro-credentials can help bridge the gap from college to career. While employers continue to acknowledge the importance of a college degree, they report that resumes and transcripts do not always show fully the skills new graduates bring to the workforce. They want potential employees to be better at articulating and demonstrating skills and competencies developed through courses, internships, and co-curricular experiences. In addition, individuals are also seeking opportunities for post-college lifelong learning in order to stay professionally relevant or change careers. According to a 2018 Northeastern University study, over 60% of employers surveyed have either “made a formal effort” or are “exploring and considering” moving toward a skills or competency-based hiring strategy. In addition, employers are increasingly using software with keyword filters that search for resumes with certain skills necessary for that job or field. Those who do not have those keywords listed on their resumes are filtered out by the software and never reviewed by a hiring manager. Credly Acclaim addresses this issue by collecting job postings from across the internet that list skills related to specific badges. Badge earners can then see job postings that include the skills and competencies listed in the badge’s metadata. Digital credentials offer a visual representation of skills that are validated by the university. Students who better understand and can articulate that they have these skills are better positioned for post-graduation professional success.

Pricing and Financial Aid: Students will be charged standard tuition rates for any academic credit-bearing courses included in micro-credentials. Courses taken as part of a micro-credentialing program at UAlbany must fit into the student’s program of study in order to be covered by financial aid. As with continuing education courses, UAlbany schools and colleges currently have the discretion to charge a fee for badges that do not include credit-bearing courses since there is no standard tuition charged for participation. This is not required and in many cases charging students may not be a good strategy. There is no standard pricing for micro-credentialing and pricing often depends on what the market for a particular field dictates. Traditional financial aid programs do not cover the cost of micro-credentials or continuing education courses.

Evidence of Learning: Students are awarded a micro-credential based on their ability to demonstrate that they have obtained certain competencies and skills. This is made tangible through evidence that will be uploaded to the digital badge on Credly Acclaim. Students only earn the micro-credential if they

submit that evidence. In the case of micro-credentials built into courses, one of the designated competency-based assignments may be used as evidence. Those who plan to offer skills or continuing education badges not built into courses should outline how participants will create physical evidence of skill/competency obtainment and a plan for assessment. Please note: Materials or assignments related to a micro-credential may be embedded into an existing course and students may be required to complete that work as part of a course. However, since Credly Acclaim is an outward facing platform and the evidence required to earn a micro-credential must be posted online, students should be given the opportunity to opt out of submitting the evidence necessary to earn the micro-credential. Students who do not submit the evidence will not earn the micro-credential or the associated digital badge, but will earn credit in the course for completing the assignment.

Examples of evidence from other institutions, include: Western Michigan University / Hawthorn College of Business Badge For each badge, students may compose a written reflection paper, set up an online photo album of their experiences or post a YouTube video where they discuss what they learned. This evidence should relate to the badge experience. Illinois State University / Honors Program "Discovering Dimensions" Badge Students are expected to create infographics that capture connections between course content and interviews facilitated with professionals. This evidence is evaluated by Honors Mindset Seminar instructors. Students who submit evidence earning an "excellent" or "exceptional" rating are issued badges.

Approval Process: Faculty and/or departments will develop micro-credentials through a proposal process centralized in the Center for Experiential Education (CEE), which will convene a committee of faculty and staff to review and approve them. The CEE will report approved micro-credentials to the Graduate Academic Council (GAC) for those at the graduate level, and to the Undergraduate Academic Council (UAC) for those at the undergraduate level. The review and approval process will allow the university to catalogue micro-credentialing opportunities and provide an efficient and consistent mechanism for tracking and managing badges on Credly Acclaim. Any new courses created in the process of developing a micro-credential must go through the normal course approval process.

Implementation Process: The unit offering the micro-credential will be required to track student progress toward earning the credential, assess student learning, and collect evidence of skill obtainment. With the support of the Center for Experiential Education, departments will be able to issue approved micro-credentials on Credly Acclaim themselves. Departments are responsible for marketing their micro-credentials to potential participants and advising students about the programs, as they would with other programs offered by their department. Micro-credentials are flexible with regard to how issuers create them, define their use, and develop their criteria. While there is no minimum or maximum number of hours or experiences required for a student to earn a microcredential, they must be of high-quality, meaningful, and competency-based. For example, if the experience can serve as a single bullet point description on a resume, it is likely not complex enough to be a micro-credential. The Center for Experiential Education provides the following resources to departments wishing to issue microcredentials: • Support designing and creating the digital badge that will be posted on Credly. Design criteria will be developed as part of the Credly implementation process. • Assistance developing micro-credentials, including connecting faculty to employers. 4 • Maintaining institutional catalogue of university micro-credentials and university-wide website about UAlbany's micro-credentialing program.

Other SUNY Programs: Micro-credentialing is increasingly common and has become a priority for SUNY. The three other SUNY university centers are already awarding micro-credentials. Both the University at Buffalo and Stony Brook are using Credly Acclaim to issue digital credentials. Stony Brook University Stony Brook offers a handful of small badging programs around the campus, but the most significant program is within School of Professional Development and this program offers oversight and direction to the smaller programs. University at Buffalo The University at Buffalo has created an Office of Micro-Credentialing, housed within the Office of the Provost, specifically to address the micro-credentialing needs of the university. Ten micro-credentials are currently being offered, with plans to add more in the future. Binghamton University The Thomas J. Watson School of Engineering and Applied Science has built badges into their continuing education offerings. They also offer digital badges to faculty and staff through the University Center for Training and Development.

Recommended Policy/Procedure for Micro-Credentialing at UAlbany: Micro-credentials at UAlbany are a collection of courses and experiences that help students develop and document professional skills and competencies. The University at Albany will offer three types of micro-credentials: Professional Pathways, Skill Badges, and Continuing Education Badges. Micro-credentials will be issued as an icon called a digital badge. They will not appear on the academic transcript, but on an online credentialing platform called Credly Acclaim. Students will earn a micro-credential based on tangible evidence of competencies and skills that they will upload to the digital badge on Credly Acclaim. Faculty and/or departments will develop micro-credentials through a proposal process centralized in the Center for Experiential Education (CEE), which will convene a committee of faculty and staff to review and approve them. This committee will include an active member of the Undergraduate Academic Council (UAC) and an active member of the Graduate Academic Council (GAC). The CEE will report approved micro-credentials to GAC for those at the graduate level, to UAC for those at the undergraduate level, and all approved micro-credentials to the Senate Executive Committee.